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FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE

RESPECTING

SYRIA

PART 2

January to December 1948

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2. Mr. Broadbent No. 28 E	1948	System economic summary Economic activity in December 1947 and January 1948
3. Mr. Broadbent No. 28 E	1948	Annual report on the basis of former mission in Syria
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CONFIDENTIAL

FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE RESPECTING
SYRIA

PART 2.—JANUARY TO DECEMBER 1948

E 9137/42/65

No. 1

THE GREATER SYRIA MOVEMENT

(With Maps)

Summary

Historical Background—1919-30

The demands for the reconstitution of Ottoman Syria have been primarily due to resentment at its dismemberment in 1920 (para. 1). There is, in fact, considerable justification for the unification of Ottoman or "geographical" Syria on racial and geographical grounds (paras. 2-6). A unified Syria was recommended in the King-Crane report (paras. 7-8) and made a cardinal point in the programme of the General Syrian Congress of 1919 (paras. 9-10). The expulsion of King Faisal from Damascus in 1920 was a powerful stimulus to the Syrians to press for unity and independence (para. 11). Under French rule, however, the internal unity of Syria was broken down by successive administrative changes (paras. 12-15), but the French were themselves responsible for the creation of the Syrian People's Party which upheld "Greater Syria" ideals (paras. 16-19).

Developments in Syria, 1930-40

Autun Saadeh's Syrian National Party was the first to evolve a definite conception of Syrian Nationalism (paras. 20-23).

Iraqi schemes for union with Syria, Palestine and Transjordan, 1930-40.

King Faisal cherished the ideal of returning to Damascus as King of a joint Syrian-Iraqi State until his death in 1933 (paras. 24-25). Like Nuri Pasha, he thought of a Greater Syria incorporating Iraq as a solution to the Palestine problem (paras. 26-27). Nuri submitted a

memorandum on this subject to the Minister of State in January, 1943 (paras. 28-29). The idea of a union between Iraq and Transjordan was kept alive during Faisal's reign and after his death (para. 30).

Developments in Transjordan, 1941-47

King Abdullah has cherished the ideal of re-uniting "geographical" Syria ever since he assumed the rulership of Transjordan in 1921, but until his Coronation in 1946 and the withdrawal of Allied troops from Syria and Lebanon in the same year, he lacked freedom of action to plan a *coup d'Etat* (paras. 31-33). His recent speeches and his White Paper show the extent to which he is preoccupied with Greater Syria plans (paras. 34-38). Generally speaking, he would have but lukewarm support from his people in such plans (para. 39).

Reactions in Syria

A return to a monarchical régime would probably be favoured by many Syrians, although there is no great enthusiasm for the Greater Syria scheme or for Abdullah among the bulk of the Syrian people. There are, however, influential pro-Royalist groups in Damascus and Aleppo (paras. 40-44). The tribal leaders (para. 45), the Druze (para. 46), the Hauranis (para. 47) the Army (para. 48) and the Syrian Christians (para. 49) are, in general, considered likely to side with Abdullah against the Damascus régime. The Government are strongly opposed to Abdullah's plans,

which has resulted in a diplomatic estrangement between the two countries. Outside Government circles the opposition is led by the Communists (paras. 50-52).

Reactions in Lebanon

In general, the Lebanese people (with the exception of the Sunnis and some Christians) and the Government are opposed to Abdullah's scheme (paras. 53-56).

Reactions in the Arab World

(a) *Palestine*.—The Arabs' support of the scheme is qualified by distrust of Abdullah; the Jews, however, might not oppose it (para. 57).

(b) *Iraq*.—Iraq's relations with Transjordan have been strengthened by the recent Treaty of Friendship, and, apart from the opposition press, she might be expected to welcome a Greater Syria (para. 58).

(c) and (d) *Egypt and Sa'udi Arabia* are both openly hostile towards the scheme (paras. 59-60).

(e) *Arab League*.—At a special meeting of the League Council on 28th November, 1946, member States confirmed their loyalty to the League Covenant and agreed not to dispute the independence of any other

States. The Arab League has no wish to become involved in Greater Syria polemics (para. 61).

Reactions elsewhere

The Turkish Government are favourably disposed towards the scheme, and the French are now more willing to support it than formerly, but the Soviet Union are outspokenly critical of it. The United States are not likely to encourage it, for fear of antagonising Ibn Sa'ud; the attitude of His Majesty's Government is one of strict neutrality (paras. 62-66).

Conclusions

The realisation of Abdullah's present scheme for the union of Syria and Transjordan (from which Palestine and Lebanon appear to be excluded) would have important political and economic repercussions throughout the Middle East (para. 67). Abdullah's lack of prestige and financial support, coupled with administrative difficulties, make the likelihood of his staging a *coup* remote at present, but the Greater Syria idea is not likely to fade away (paras. 68-69).

THE GREATER SYRIA MOVEMENT

Historical background—1919-30

The demands for the reconstitution of a unified Syrian State have their origin in the intense resentment felt by the Arabs at the dismemberment of Ottoman Syria sanctioned by the Supreme Council at San Remo on 25th April, 1920. Under Ottoman rule the area which now comprises Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Transjordan was a unified entity, split up administratively into the *Vilayets*(¹) of Syria and Aleppo. Subsequently, the *Vilayet* of Beirut (within which was the autonomous *sanjaq*(²) of Lebanon), the independent *sanjaq* of Jerusalem and the *Mutasarifat*(³) of Deir ez-Zor were formed, the last two directly under the Central Government at Constantinople (see Map No. 1).

2. Ottoman Syria was, in fact, a geographical unit bounded on the north by the Taurus Mountains, on the south by the Sinai desert, on the west by the Mediterranean and on the east by the Syrian desert.

(¹) A *Vilayet*, under the governorship of a *Vali*, was the largest administrative division in the Ottoman Empire; *sanjaqs* or *Mutasarifs* (under a *Mutasarif*) were sub-divisions of a *Vilayet*.

There is also an ethnographical unity about Ottoman or "geographical" Syria, as it is often called. Whereas the Arabs of the peninsula are mainly of the Mediterranean type, the Syrian Arabs, also of Mediterranean origin, have mingled with the Mountain or Alpine stock to produce a Dinaric or Armenoid type. In most of the interior a mixture of these two races is found, the Mediterranean predominating. Again, there is a considerable difference between the evolution of the Syrians and of other Arab peoples, owing to the impact of different historical influences. Thus the Iraqis have absorbed a measure of Persian culture; in Egypt an indigenous civilisation has never been entirely submerged by the Arab conquests; in the peninsula the original purely Arab or "semitic" stock has remained almost unchanged. In Syria the impact from without has been largely a Western one, associated particularly with France and America. It would, however, be unreasonable to dwell too strongly on the ethnographical unity of Syria such as it is. While there is a general racial similarity among the Arabs of geographi-

cal Syria, the diversity of religious denominations has tended to foster a sectarian outlook among the Muslim and Christian minorities in Syria and Lebanon. This is particularly true in the case of the Druzes, Alawis and Maronites. Furthermore, the existence of certain non-Arabic-speaking communities — the Armenians, Assyrians, Kurds, Turcomans and Circassians — further weakens the racial unity of the Syrian *bloc*. But, as will be seen from the following tables, whereas the Arabic-speaking religious minorities are of considerable numerical importance in Syria and Lebanon, the non-Arabic-speaking communities are relatively unimportant.

(a) Approximate percentage of the principal Arabic-speaking religious minorities in Syria and Lebanon(¹)

	Syria	Lebanon
	%	%
Alawis	11	...
Maronites	4	30
Druzes	4	6
Greek Catholic and Orthodox	6	15
	21.4	51

(b) Approximate percentage of the non-Arabic-speaking minorities(²)

	Syria	Lebanon
	%	%
Armenians	5	6
Assyrians	3	...
Kurds	6	...
Turcomans	1	...
Circassians	6	...
	12.9	6

3. Thus it will be seen that in Syria the minorities, including the lesser ones(³), account for 39.3 per cent. of the population, the remainder, 60.7 per cent., being predominantly Sunni Muslims. In Lebanon, however, the figures are, respectively, 60 per cent. and 40 per cent., of which

(¹) These figures are based upon an analysis of the Syrian and Lebanese populations for the years 1943 and 1944 respectively. The smaller religious communities, such as the Isma'ilis, Syrian Catholics, Syrian Orthodox, Chaldean Catholics, Jews and Yezidis are not shown. In all, they make up approximately 5 per cent. of the Syrian and 3 per cent. of the Lebanese populations.

(²) Syriac is still spoken among a large percentage of the Syrian Orthodox and Catholic communities, but many are bilingual in Arabic and Syriac.

only 23 per cent. are Sunnis, the remaining 17 per cent. Shi'as.

4. A racial analysis of Palestine and Transjordan reveals, apart from the Jews, an overwhelming majority of Sunni Arabs in each country, predominantly of the same "Armenoid" and Mediterranean types as are found in Syria and part of Lebanon (see para. 2). There are, however, small communities of Druze, Armenians and Bahais (a Shi'ite sect founded in 1844 at Tabriz by a Persian, Mirza Ali Mohammed) in both countries, of Shi'as in Palestine and of Circassians and Turcomans in Transjordan. Thus there is considerable racial and religious unity in Syria, Palestine and Transjordan, though Lebanon, by reason of its numerous minorities, stands apart. To sum up, "the Syrians and Lebanese are members of the Arab group of peoples; but they differ in some important ways from other members of that group; and they also differ among themselves in certain ways." (A. H. Hourani, "Syria and Lebanon," p. 97).

5. The boundaries of the San Remo mandated territories of Syria, Palestine and Transjordan shattered the racial and economic unity which had existed in Syria under the Turks. In particular, the frontier separating Syria from Transjordan and Syria and Lebanon from Palestine has been justifiably criticised as entirely artificial, following no ethnographical or geographical boundary (see Map No. 4). The majority of the Druze shaikhs have always been more willing to give allegiance to Great Britain than to France, while in the past there has been a tendency for many of them to look to King Abdullah of Transjordan as their leader (see para. 46). The frontier separating Palestine from Transjordan, following as it does the line of the Jordan Valley, is obviously less open to criticism; the frontiers of Lebanon will be considered later (see paras. 12-13).

6. Professor H. A. R. Gibb, in a paper on Arab Federation written in June, 1941, makes the following comment on the demands for the reconstitution of geographical or "Greater Syria":—

"The passionate insistence of Arab Nationalists upon the wrong done to the Arabs by the administration of the French Mandate in Syria and the separation of Palestine and Transjordan from Syria, together with the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine, rests upon natural social, geographical and economic grounds.

The disruption of their former economic unity, the hindrances placed in the way of political progress by sub-division and colonial administration, the embittering of confessional and regional antagonisms which have been to a great extent attenuated in other Arab countries are felt all the more keenly since Syria-Palestine is the keystone of any unified political structure in Arab Asia. Syria with its frontage on the Mediterranean, is the bazaar of the eastern Arab countries; Palestine is their strategic link with Egypt."

7. A single mandate for the whole of geographical Syria was recommended in the King-Crane report^(*) dated 28th August, 1919, based upon extensive inquiries made in June and July of that year from a representative selection of the Syrian people. The importance of this report lies in its objective analysis of Arab political feeling in the period immediately following the First World War. The principal recommendations of the report are as follows^(*) :—

"We recommend . . . that the unity of Syria be preserved in accordance with the earnest petition of the great majority of the people of Syria. The territory concerned is too limited, the population too small, and the economic, geographic, racial and linguistic unity too manifest to make a setting-up of independent States within its boundaries desirable, if such division can possibly be avoided. The country is very largely Arab in language, culture, traditions and customs. This recommendation is in line with . . . the principles of the League of Nations, as well as in answer to the desires of the majority of the population concerned"

"In standing thus for the recognition of the unity of Syria, the natural desires of regions like the Lebanon, which have already had a measure of independence, should not be forgotten. It will make for real unity, undoubtedly to give a large measure of local autonomy, and especially in the case of strongly unified

(*) Dr. Henry C. King and Mr. Charles R. Crane were the two American representatives nominated by President Wilson to carry out an inquiry in Syria, Palestine and Iraq to ascertain the wishes of the peoples concerned as to their future. The original intention was to send out a commission representative of Great Britain, America, France and Italy, but only the Americans eventually went.

(*) For full text see G. Antonius, "The Arab Awakening," Appendix H.

groups. Even the "Damascus programme" [see para. 9] which presses so earnestly the unity of Syria, itself urges a government 'on broad decentralisation principles.' Lebanon has achieved a considerable degree of prosperity and autonomy within the Turkish Empire. She certainly should not find her legitimate aspirations less possible within a Syrian national State. On the contrary, it may be confidently expected that both her economic and political relations with the rest of Syria would be better if she were a constituent member of the State rather than entirely independent of it"

"The Commissioners urge, therefore, for the largest future good of all groups and regions alike, the placing of the whole of Syria under a single mandate."

8. The third recommendation was for a "serious modification of the extreme Zionist programme for Palestine of unlimited immigration of Jews, looking finally to making Palestine distinctly a Jewish State." The commission considered that "there would be no reason why Palestine could not be included in a united Syrian State, just as other portions of the country, the holy places being cared for by an international and inter-religious commission, somewhat as at present, under the oversight and approval of the Mandatory and of the League of Nations. The Jews, of course, would have representation upon this commission."

9. The desire for a unified Syrian State, emphasised in the King-Crane report, had been officially voiced by the General Syrian Congress, which met at Damascus on the 2nd July, 1919. This congress was composed of eighty-five elected delegates drawn from the whole of Syria (including Palestine), Christians being represented in a higher proportion than their numerical strength in the country. The opening session was attended by sixty-nine delegates. The relevant resolutions of this congress, which were passed unanimously, are as follows^(*) :—

(1) "We desire full and absolute political independence for Syria within the following boundaries: on the north, the Taurus Range; on the south, a line running from Rafah to Al-Jauf and following the Syria-Hejaz border below

(*) For full text see G. Antonius, "The Arab Awakening," Appendix G.

Aqaba; on the east, the boundary formed by the Euphrates and Khabur rivers and a line stretching for some distance east of Abu-Kemal to some distance east of Al-Jauf; on the west, the Mediterranean Sea."⁽¹⁾

(2) "We desire that there should be no dismemberment of Syria, and no separation of Palestine or the coastal regions in the West or the Lebanon from the mother country; and we ask that the unity of the country be maintained under any circumstances."

10. On the 8th March, 1920, the General Syrian Congress met again in Damascus and passed a resolution proclaiming the independence of Syria (as defined in resolution No. 1 of the July 1919 programme, see para. 9) as a sovereign State and a constitutional monarchy with the Amir Faisal as King. A proviso was added reserving to the Lebanon its acquired right to autonomy within the framework of a unified Syria. These resolutions were not recognised by His Majesty's Government or by the French Government.

11. The expulsion of Faisal from Damascus on 28th July, 1920, was a profound shock to the majority of Syrians. Although his popularity had decreased since the 8th March resolution—for he had been widely criticised for not having presented a firmer front to the French demands for the partial occupation of the country—he was undoubtedly considered as the rightful ruler of the Syrian State, should such a state ever come into being. His expulsion appears to have served as an incentive to the Syrian nationalists to renew their efforts, for, like the Arab nationalists, their first aims were to bring to an end mandatory rule. Independence was for them a necessary forerunner to unity.

12. Such territorial unity as did exist in the Syria of 1920 was, however, short-lived. On 31st August of that year, General Gouraud issued a decree which

(1) The frontier thus described is of considerable interest as being perhaps the only official Arab delimitation of Greater Syria. Apart from the vagueness of the northern frontier, the others can be traced without difficulty. The southern line follows, roughly, the present frontier from Rafah to Aqaba, but is prolonged to include Al-Jauf, which is now 110 miles inside Saudi Arabian territory. On the other hand, the line of the Khabur and Euphrates rivers down to Abu Kemal is approximately 50 miles inside the present Iraqi-Syrian frontier (see Map No. 4).

brought into being the "State of Greater Lebanon." This new State consisted of the former Ottoman "sanjaq" of Lebanon with the addition of the rich inland plain of Biqa'a and the coastal towns of Tripoli, Beirut, Sidon and Tyre (see Map No. 3). In size and population it was almost double the Ottoman sanjaq.

13. This enlargement of Lebanon at the expense of Syria was bitterly resented by most Syrians, and there have been frequent demands for the return of what they describe as "the four cazas," i.e., the present "cazas" (districts) of Hermel, Baalbek and Rashaya, the caza of Zahlé less the town and immediate neighbourhood of Zahlé and that part of the present caza of Merdjayoun which constituted the former caza of Hasbeya (see Map No. 3)^(*). This re-adjustment of the frontiers meant, in effect, that Syria was deprived of Tripoli and Beirut, two ports which, between them, handled the bulk of Syrian sea-borne trade. Furthermore, the transferred territory was predominantly Muslim. This resulted in the Lebanese Christians barely retaining their numerical superiority, whereas beforehand they had had a substantial majority. The creation of Greater Lebanon led to the growth of an irredentist movement which later found expression in the Syrian People's Party (see para. 16).

14. A further cause of dissatisfaction, not only to the Syrian nationalists but to the bulk of the Syrian people, was the division of the rest of the country into three distinct States—Damascus, Aleppo and the Alawites. This took place at the end of 1920. A year later the State of Jebel Druze came into being, while in the north the sanjaq of Alexandretta was granted virtual autonomy within the State of Aleppo. In 1922 a Syrian Federation was formed (see Map No. 2a), from which, however, Greater Lebanon and Jebel Druze were excluded. But on the 1st January, 1925, this Syrian Federation was itself dissolved and a decree was put into effect uniting the States of Aleppo and Damascus into the unitary State of Syria (see Map No. 2b), the Alawite State reverting to its former status. Yet another change occurred on 24th May, 1926, when Greater Lebanon was constituted an independent Republic under a Lebanese President with its own senate and assembly.

(*) For further details see F.O. print E 1110/20/88 of 8th February, 1944, "The Boundaries of the Lebanon." ("Further Correspondence respecting Eastern Affairs," Part 56, Document No. 36.)

15. These successive changes were interpreted by the Syrians as showing a desire on the part of the French authorities to multiply divisions in the country and to foster sectarianism. The Executive Committee of the Syro-Palestinian Congress even went so far as to lay a frank charge before the League of Nations that France had deliberately sought to destroy Syrian unity^(*). A further charge was that by shutting off the Syrian State from the sea (see Map No. 2b), the French were endeavouring to hamper Syrian trade and thus smother the nascent nationalist movement centred on Damascus.

16. Whatever the real motives of the French may have been—and considered objectively it is impossible to conclude that the divisions of Syrian territory were in the best interests of the Syrian people—their policy, far from crushing Syrian nationalism, had precisely the reverse effect, as the 1925 revolt shows. Curiously enough, it was the French High Commissioner who encouraged the formation of an organisation which was destined to serve as a central pivot of discontent. At General Sarrail's^(†) instigation the Syrian People's Party was founded on 9th February, 1925. The official programme of this party, which immediately attracted attention in all large towns, was announced by Faris Bey Al Khouri on 5th June, and included the following principles^(‡) :—

- (2) "Unification of Syria so as to include all territory lying within its natural boundaries."
- (4) "Education of the people for social, democratic and civil unity."
- (6) "A unified system of education, and provision for compulsory elementary education."

The other main principle centred on Syria's right to enjoy democratic government.

17. In their desire to re-create Syrian unity the supporters of the People's Party were just as anxious to rid the country of sectarian rivalries as of political divisions. They constantly emphasized the common

(*) See MacCallum, "The Nationalist Crusade in Syria" (New York, 1928), p. 55.

(†) This move was not prompted purely by the General's altruistic sense. He was growing weary of successive deputations, each bringing its own grievance, and suggested that the discontented elements should join forces and draw up a programme.

(‡) For full text see MacCallum, "The Nationalist Crusade in Syria," p. 20.

interests of Druzes, Muslims and Christians of all denominations. To them all who cherished the twin ideals of unity and independence were brothers; all who were willing to submit to foreign domination were their enemies.

18. But despite the fact that the Party's programme had made a wide appeal, it did not attract a large following. Fear of possible French reprisals and suspicion of French motives were too deeply ingrained into the Syrian mental make-up to allow full confidence in the party^(§). Thus, when in August, 1925, its leaders were agitating for a concerted rising in Damascus, timed to take place while the bulk of the French troops were occupied in the south quelling the Druzes, they met with only lukewarm support.

19. Nevertheless, the Syrian People's Party can be considered as the rightful forerunner of the present Greater Syria movement. Although the immediate aims of the early nationalists have now been achieved, the desire for complete unity within geographical Syria persists, and it is only possible fully to appreciate the new movement by studying its immediate historical background.

Developments in Syria, 1930-40

20. The Greater Syria movement (by which is meant the movement sponsored by King Abdullah to set himself up as head of a State comprising Syria, Transjordan and possibly Lebanon) has only come to the fore during the last two years, but the twin ideals of re-uniting "geographical" Syria and setting up a Syrian monarchy remained latent in the Levant States throughout the '30s. The first of these ideals was given fresh impetus by the formation of the Syrian National Party (Hizb al Qawmi as Suri or Parti Populaire Syrien) in 1933 under the leadership of Antun Saadeh, who was the first to evolve a definite conception of Syrian nationalism. Hitherto Syrian ideas on this subject had been mainly nebulous and inchoate. Where they had taken shape they had been largely negative, centred on opposition to foreign domination and sectarianism, rather than on formulating a constructive programme. The Syrian People's Party had, it is true, drawn up a programme (see para. 16) in which Syrian unity was a corner-stone, but

(§) A month after the party's widely-advertised formation, only about 200 persons had officially enrolled.

this party had no lasting influence and by 1930 had ceased to be of any importance.

21. Its place was taken by the Syrian National Party. Antun Saadeh's fundamental principle was to stress the existence of a Syrian nation distinct from the surrounding Arab nations. His definition coincided roughly with that of the General Syrian Congress (see para. 9), but included the Sinai Peninsula. For him, the supreme task of the Syrians was to bring about the unity and independence of the Syrian nation. The party was a secret organisation from 1933 to 1935, when it was discovered by the French authorities and stringent repressive measures taken against it. But these only served to increase the zeal of its followers, and in 1937, the year of its zenith, membership probably amounted to about 10,000, approximately 7,000 in the Lebanon and 3,000 in Syria, while Antun Saadeh claimed that there were a further 1,000 in Palestine.

22. On the outbreak of war Saadeh, who had already aroused opposition from certain sections of the party on account of his pro-Axis sympathies, fled to South America and the French declared the party illegal. During the war it remained in a state of suspended animation, but the recent return of its leader has brought about a revival of interest in it (see para. 53). It must be remembered, however, that, seen in its right perspective, the influence of Antun Saadeh and his followers in Syria (with the possible exception of Homs at one time) has been small, although in Lebanon he has been more successful. Furthermore, his rejection of Arab nationalism—his belief in a separate Syrian nation implied the denial of the existence of an Arab nation—had aroused considerable opposition from the Arab nationalists before 1939 and such opposition continues. To-day the party as such hardly exists in Syria—many of its members were absorbed into the National Bloc as early as 1937—but its ideas are still held by a number of individuals.

23. The Syrian National Party was the only one whose programme focused on the reconstitution of "geographical" Syria. The National Bloc advocated national unity as a means towards the attainment of liberty, but did not extend their ideas of Syrian unity beyond the frontiers of post-war Syria. Dr. Shabbander's group^(¶) also upheld the ideal of Syrian unity, but

(¶) Dr. Shabbander returned to Syria from exile in 1937. On his return he organised a group in opposition to the Nationalist Bloc.

they were more uncompromising in their nationalism and opposed the *bloc* for having concluded a treaty with the French which gave Syria less than full independence. The importance of this group lies, however, in the fact that it was monarchist in outlook and favoured the candidacy of the Amir Abdullah for the throne of Syria. This project was widely discussed in Syria during the spring and summer of 1939, but the outbreak of war temporarily put an end to such discussion.

Iraqi schemes for union with Syria, Palestine and Transjordan, 1930-34

24. In Iraq during the early '30s King Faisal had still not lost sight of the possibility of a return to Damascus as king. At one time it was thought that the French were favouring this project, and Faisal seems to have felt sure that he could rely upon French help. A despatch from the Foreign Office to Baghdad dated 27th November, 1931, states :—

"Whatever the intentions of the French Government may be, it is clear . . . that, since his return to Baghdad, King Faisal has shown that he regards it as settled that he is to be king of Syria as well as of Iraq, and that he is satisfied in his own mind both that the French Government have seriously made the proposal and that His Majesty's Government would raise no objection."

25. Until his death in September, 1933, King Faisal continued to cherish the ideal of Arab unity, a necessary preliminary to which was, in his opinion, the union of Syria and Iraq. Early in 1933 he proposed the summoning of an Arab conference in Baghdad—a proposal which was later made by Nuri Pasha in November, 1939—to which Palestinian and Transjordan leaders were to be invited. Faisal, like Nuri (see para. 28) was thus thinking of a Greater Syria incorporating Iraq. Sir F. Humphrys, in a despatch from Baghdad dated the 5th January, 1933, writes of Faisal :—

"He has never ceased to nurse his Syrian supporters carefully, nor to maintain close touch with the nationalist elements in Damascus. During the early months of 1932 sections of the Arabic press in both Syria and Iraq constantly published articles in which the accession of the Amir Abdullah, King Ali or King

Faisal to the Syrian throne was discussed."

26. Faisal, again like Nuri, also thought of the incorporation of Palestine in a Greater Syria as a solution of the Palestine problem. Captain Holt, in a despatch from Baghdad of 17th August, 1936, writes:—

"King Faisal frequently declared his conviction that the problem of reconciling the Arabs to Zionism would be solved if only the Arab countries could be brought within some kind of federation. It was, he said, the prospect of becoming a subject minority within the limits of Palestine which exasperated the Arabs. If Palestine were united with Syria and Iraq, that threat would be removed, and he foresaw no difficulty in arranging for the satisfactory development of the Jewish National Home in Palestine if this unity were achieved."

27. Faisal's scheme for the union of Iraq and Syria did not arouse much enthusiasm in Baghdad, where it was felt that, with Damascus as the capital, Iraq, separated by 500 miles of desert, would soon become a neglected backwater, and after Faisal's death the project ceased to be discussed. However, relations between the two countries were strengthened by a "Bon Voisinage" treaty signed on 22nd April, 1937.

28. King Faisal's scheme was revived in January, 1943, by the then Prime Minister, Nuri Pasha, who wrote a memorandum to the Minister of State, Mr. Casey, outlining the history and ideals of the Arab Nationalist Movement and concluding with the following proposals:—

"In my view the only fair solution, and indeed the only hope of securing permanent peace, contentment and progress in these Arab areas is for the United Nations to declare now:

"(1) That Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, and Transjordan shall be re-united into one State."

"(2) That the form of Government of this State, whether monarchical or republican, whether unitary or federal, shall be decided by the peoples of this country themselves . . ."

"(6) The Jews in Palestine shall be given semi-autonomy. They shall have the right to their own rural and urban district administration, including

schools, health institutes and policy, subject to general supervision by the Syrian State."

"(7) Jerusalem shall be a city to which members of all religions shall have free access for pilgrimage and worship, and a special commission composed of representatives of the three theocratic religions shall be set up to ensure this."

"(8) That if they demand it, the Maronites in the Lebanon shall be granted a privileged régime such as they possessed during the last years of the Ottoman Empire. This special régime, like those to be set up in paragraphs (6) and (7) above, shall rest on an International Guarantee."

"If it is possible in the manner suggested above to create a Confederation of Arab States including Iraq, Syria, Palestine and Transjordan at the beginning, to which other Arab States may later adhere, then a great many of the difficulties which have faced Great Britain and France in the Near East during the past two decades will disappear. The Arabs of Palestine at present fear that they will become a minority in a Jewish State, and bitterly oppose the grant of specific rights to the Jews, but this hostility would be allayed if Palestine became part of a large, strong Arab State. The Jews could establish their National Home in those parts of Palestine where they are now in the majority with a greater feeling of security, because there would be more goodwill on the part of their Arab neighbours, and as a semi-autonomous community in a much larger State their economic opportunities would increase."

29. The scheme outlined above was never pursued, H.M. Ambassador, Baghdad, advising Nuri to drop it. From then onwards Nuri thought more in terms of a wider Arab union—he was one of the few consistent protagonists of Arab unity—rather than simply of an alliance between Iraq and Syria. There was some talk in Baghdad that the troubles in Syria in 1945 should be used by Iraq as an opportunity to bring about the union of the two States under Hashimite rule, but the Regent was prompt to show his disapproval of such schemes.

30. The idea of a union between Iraq and Transjordan was also kept alive during Faisal's reign and continued to be discussed after his death. In 1932 a scheme to link Baghdad and Haifa by means of a trans-desert railway (which

had been mooted at intervals for many years) was under discussion in Baghdad, a project which would have considerably strengthened the ties between Iraq and Transjordan. King Abdullah was most anxious to see the railway completed, hoping that it would increase the pilgrim traffic passing through his country. When he visited Baghdad on the 5th November, 1935, for the celebrations connected with the circumcision of King Faisal II (then Crown Prince), he even stated to Nuri Pasha that he would welcome a scheme for the union of the two countries, but the matter was taken no further. This idea had been broached earlier, however (in August, 1933), by Rashid Ali Al-Gailani, the then Prime Minister, to the Political Agent, Koweit.

Developments in Transjordan, 1941-47

31. King Abdullah has cherished the ideal of re-uniting "geographical" Syria ever since he assumed the rulership of Transjordan in 1921. He has even stated on various occasions that when His Majesty's Government first recognised his position in Transjordan, he was by implication promised the throne of Syria, provided that he abandoned his intention of raising a rebellion in that territory against the French authorities—a claim which is, of course, without foundation. His attitude was made plain at the time of the Allied invasion of Syria in June, 1941, an event which he regarded as absolving him from all earlier promises of non-interference in Syrian affairs. He was particularly disappointed at not being assigned a rôle in the invasion force and had obviously hoped for a share of the Syrian pickings. His first action after the Allied entry of the country was to send letters to most of the leading Syrian politicians, pressing his candidature to the Syrian throne. At the same time there was strong feeling among the people that the occasion should be used to bring about the union of the two countries, and steps were taken to organise a demonstration in Amman, demanding this. However, the Government would not allow the demonstrations. In July, 1941 Abdullah showed the British Resident a petition bearing 844 signatures asking him that he should enlist the support of His Majesty's Government to make him King of Syria.

32. The subject of Arab unity began to be generally discussed in Egypt, Iraq and the Levant States in 1943, and Abdallah,

hoping to secure the lead, issued a proclamation in April of that year, inviting the political leaders of Syria "from the Gulf of Aqaba to the Mediterranean and the Upper Euphrates" to attend a conference under his presidency at Amman to plan a union or federation of geographical Syria. But this proposal was not received warmly in Syria or Lebanon, both Shukri Quwatli and Riad As-Solh fearing that it might result merely in an extension of Abdullah's powers. The Iraqi reactions to the proclamation were somewhat lukewarm, although the newspaper *Az-Zaman* dwelt at length upon the Iraqis' pride and trust in the Hashimite House.

33. Throughout the next three years Abdullah continued to interest himself in the idea of a Greater Syria, but he realised that there was no possibility of staging a *coup* while the French remained in control in Syria and Lebanon, and while Transjordan herself remained a mandated territory. However, the departure of Allied troops from the Levant States in April, 1946, followed by the granting of independence to Transjordan in May, removed these obstacles and was used by Abdullah to further his plans. He is known to have sent emissaries to Aleppo in May, 1946, to enlist support for his cause, and similar missions are believed to have visited Damascus. He is also reported to have held discussions in February, 1947, with representatives of his Syrian supporters, at which the feasibility of a joint *coup d'Etat* was discussed, but he has been obliged to tread warily, in view of the Syrian Government's hostile attitude (see para. 51). In a speech from the Throne at the opening of the ordinary session of the fifth Legislative Council on 11th November, 1946, he referred to the ties linking Syria and Transjordan, and to the long-standing interest he had shown in Syria's struggle for independence. His aim, he announced, was not to seek a throne, but to establish stability in the western part of the Arab world, the safety of which could only be ensured by its unity.

34. Two days later the Lebanese Foreign Minister protested against this speech (see para. 56) and stated that his own Government was opposed to the scheme, whereupon the Transjordan Foreign Minister made a long statement to the Legislative Council on 18th November, in which he said that the Kingdom of Transjordan would not abandon its efforts to secure the re-union of Syria, but that, if such a re-union took

place, the inclusion or otherwise of the Lebanon was a matter for the Lebanese people to decide for themselves. He then dismissed as fantastic the allegation that the "Greater Syria" scheme concealed a plan to permit the expansion of Zionism, emphasising that the greater the unity of Syria, the stronger the resistance to Zionism in the Arab world. Finally, he stated that the re-union of Syria would be in the best interests of the inhabitants of the countries concerned and that this would, therefore, continue to be the policy of the people and Government of Transjordan. When later that month the Syrian Prime Minister announced his intention of raising the matter before the Arab League (see para. 61), the Transjordan Foreign Minister replied that the Transjordan Government had always maintained that the change would be effected by the desire of the Syrian people, and that the question was therefore not a dispute for examination by the League Council.

35. There was further agitation in Lebanon in March, 1947 when King Abdullah, in an interview with the editor of the Lebanese weekly *Kul Shai*, on 28th March, was reported as having said that he wished to form a state comprising Syria, Transjordan, Palestine and Lebanon firmly linked to Iraq. He was also reported to have referred to the current talks of Transjordan troop concentrations⁽¹⁴⁾ on the Syrian frontier and to have stated that such talk was unfounded, that the age of troop concentrations had passed and that his army was able to stage a surprise occupation. The Lebanese Government then contacted the Transjordan Government, who issued an official *démenti*. The Prime Minister stated that the alleged statements of King Abdullah which had appeared in the Lebanese press were "baseless inventions," that King Abdullah had only answered some written questions addressed to him by the editor of *Kul Shai* and that there had been no question of an oral interview. He concluded by regretting that the Lebanese press continued to publish "invented news" calculated to impair the friendly relations between the two States. The real truth behind this affair is that

⁽¹⁴⁾ These "troop concentrations" were, in fact, routine exercises by the Arab Legion held every month near Irbid, involving about 800 men. They have however, caused several hysterical outbursts by the Syrian and Lebanese Prime Ministers. To re-assure them, the Transjordan Government issued an invitation to them to watch the manoeuvres this June (1947), but both refused.

Abdullah did make a somewhat rash statement about his Greater Syria aims, contrary to the advice of his Prime Minister, who had carefully vetted the questions which the correspondent proposed to submit to the King. His Majesty is known to be rather erratic in his statements and is easily provoked into making an unguarded reply.

36. Whatever may be Abdullah's ultimate intentions in regard to the union of Syria and Transjordan, it seems clear that the Lebanon would not form part of such a union. He also appears to have excluded Palestine from his immediate plans, although the possibility of annexing the Arab areas to Transjordan has been much in his mind.

37. Abdullah's next move⁽¹⁵⁾ was the publication on the 6th May, 1947 of a "White Paper," the first part of which is included as an Appendix to this paper, dealing with the historical justification for a re-united Syria and including a long series of documents dating from 1918 onwards. Reactions to this publication were none too favourable in the Arab world, particularly in Egypt and Sa'udi Arabia, and even in Transjordan it fell rather flat.

38. This "White Paper" was followed by a "manifesto" which His Majesty issued on the 4th August, at the Id al Fitr celebrations (the feast which marks the end of Ramadan). This "manifesto" referred, in particular, to the General Syrian Congress of 1920 in Damascus under King Faisal I (see para. 10), and maintained that either its decisions should be regarded as still binding, or a new conference of Arab States should be held to draft a further Constitution for a single United State or a form of federation of existing States. The manifesto added that Transjordan would never give up her demands for this unified Arab State, and that the Congress should re-assemble to discuss details of its constitution. This most injudicious pronouncement served only to widen the gap between Transjordan and the other member States of the Arab League, with the exception of Iraq (see para. 58). The reactions of Syria, Lebanon, Egypt and Saudi Arabia are mentioned in paras. 51, 59 and 60. Although similar declarations by His Majesty seem to have become a customary feature of Arab feast days, it is unlikely that he will make any further

⁽¹⁵⁾ The pamphlet was in fact edited and circulated by Mohammed Pasha Shureiki, Head of the Royal Diwan at Amman, although it does not bear his name.

pronouncements on Greater Syria for the time being. In mid-September he assured Saleh Jabr that he would publish no further declarations on the subject unless publicly provoked or unless an uprising in Syria should call for a statement from him. In his speech at the opening of Parliament on the 3rd November he re-affirmed an earlier statement of Samir Pasha's that the Palestine problem had eclipsed all other matters (including the "Greater Syria" question).

39. Since the autumn of 1946 there has been a definite lessening of support for the scheme in Transjordan. At that time there was a considerable body of opinion, composed largely of those who were anxious to improve their own fortunes out of the change, favourably disposed towards the idea of a Greater Syria, while the young men, in particular, feeling themselves cramped by the smallness of the country and its limited intellectual life, were eager to see the incorporation of Transjordan in a Syrian Federation. But as time passed without any spectacular developments, and the absence of funds gave rise to the doubts as to whether His Majesty's Government really were supporting the scheme—their rumoured support having doubtless increased the number of adherents—these adherents, both active and potential, began to fall away. Furthermore, King Abdullah's ill-advised statements and proclamations have undoubtedly harmed his cause, as have also his intrigues with the Druze and other minority elements in Syria. In fact, it is probably true to say that, even among those who support the scheme, there are few who would wish to see a Greater Syria under King Abdullah. His chief supporters are the traditionalist elements—the Ulema and the small landowners. The ardent nationalists—composed, in the main, of lawyers, doctors, journalists and schoolmasters—strongly resent his connexion with the British and his rumoured approval of limited Jewish immigration into Transjordan. Furthermore, the view is widely held that, were a Greater Syria to be formed with Damascus as its capital, Amman would soon sink into sleepy insignificance. There are now two semi-clandestine political movements, the Transjordan Arab Party and the Young Liberals, which have sprung up recently in opposition to Abdullah. The activities of these two parties are directed from Damascus by Dr. Subhi Abu Ghani-meh, a man who has opposed Abdullah's

policy for many years and, as a result, was deprived by him of his Transjordan nationality in January, 1947. It is doubtful whether the Transjordan Arab Party has an appreciable following in Transjordan; its influence has so far been mainly directed to winning support against Abdullah in Syria, where it is reported to be strongly backed by Nabih Azmeh, former secretary to the Palestine Defence Committee, and to receive financial assistance from the President. The Young Liberals Party is composed in the most part of Transjordan students in Damascus and Beirut. Its influence in Transjordan appears to be very slight.

Reactions in Syria

40. Ever since the expulsion of King Faisal I from Damascus in 1920 (see para. 11) there has existed an important body of opinion in Syria which has favoured the restoration of a monarchy, while among the ardent Arab Nationalists there have always been many who have been anxious to see the re-union of Syria and Transjordan, with or without Palestine and Lebanon. The so-called monarchists have not always thought solely of King Abdullah as candidate for the Syrian Throne. Among other names which have been discussed are the Amir Abdulillah, Damad Ahmed Nami Bey, a son-in-law of Abdul Hamid, who was the Chief of State of Syria from 1926-28, and the Saudi Arabian Princes. But in the last year Abdullah has come to be the only candidate in the running.

41. Since the withdrawal of the French (see para. 33) the "Greater Syria" project has been more openly discussed. In Damascus it has steadily gained favour, particularly among the professional classes (lawyers, doctors, etc.), under the leadership of Hassan al-Hakim, ex-Prime Minister, and Said Haidar, ex-President of the *Conseil d'Etat*. In the latter part of 1946 there were at least four Damascus groups working for a realisation of the scheme—the Hizb al Arabi (Arab Party), Jamaat al Ahrar (Liberal Association), Usbat al Arabi al Qaumi (National Arab League) and Baath al Qaumi (National Renaissance)—but they lack cohesion and their individual influence has not been great. A variant of the "Greater Syria" scheme has been mooted in Damascus circles, under which King Abdullah would take a place as the leading religious, not political, personality—a proposal which,

though not widely backed, would circumvent the controversial republic versus monarchy question.

42. In Aleppo and the North Syrian towns there has been considerable support for the movement since Abdullah's coronation, and interest in it was further stimulated by the visit to Aleppo of two of the King's emissaries from Amman in May, 1946 (see para. 33). The Alawites have also shown themselves keenly in favour of the movement. The Monarchists in Aleppo are led by Tewfiq Gharib Bey, who, in February, 1947, headed a delegation to King Abdullah at Shuna. Gharib apparently presented letters of allegiance to the King from Aleppo and is reported to have said that 75 per cent. of the population of Syria were Royalist sympathisers. Abdullah appears to have been non-committal in his reply, but to have stressed the necessity for the closest co-operation with Great Britain. Among the most influential supporters of the scheme in Aleppo is Monseigneur Fattal, a prominent and well-informed Christian, who has a considerable following (see para. 49).

43. Despite the fact that there is a general similarity of outlook among the monarchists of Aleppo and Damascus, mention must be made of the deep-seated rivalry which exists between north and south Syria. In fact, there always has been a closer affinity between Damascus and Jerusalem than between Damascus and Aleppo, as is pointed out by Mr. Ogden, H.M. Consul, Damascus, in a despatch dated 22nd August, 1936:—

"Aleppo to the north is further distant from Damascus than is Jerusalem to the south. Although a good road exists, there is still comparatively little interchange of population, and the average Damascene whose fortunes take him to Aleppo more often than not feels like a stranger sojourning in a strange land. Not so does he feel towards Jerusalem and the land of Palestine, which he still calls Southern Syria."

The passage of ten years has not diminished the rift between the two towns, although it is not deep enough to thwart a strong national movement. Nevertheless, the mutual antagonism may well account for the alacrity with which pro-monarchist and anti-republican sentiment has taken root in Aleppo, Homs and Hama.

44. The two most influential bodies of opinion in Syria favourable to the Greater Syria Scheme are the tribal leaders, (with

certain exceptions—see para. 45) and the Army. Despite their monarchist leanings, the bulk of the townsmen and almost all the villagers are, in general, apathetic towards it. As Mr. Shone writes in a despatch from Beirut dated 20th October, 1945:—

"most of the so-called monarchists have only a vague conception of what a monarchy would imply and little real enthusiasm for the Amir Abdullah or any other candidate; and their profession of monarchist ideas, where not merely an emanation of that fickleness and love of change which is so pronounced a Syrian characteristic, may be accounted chiefly a measure of their dissatisfaction with the present régime."

Such dissatisfaction has led them perforce to look to Amman rather than to Damascus, as Mr. Vaughan-Russell points out in a despatch from Aleppo dated 4th June, 1946:—

"The dilatoriness and weakness shown by the Government in its handling of the country's economic problems and introducing reforms—electoral, fiscal and administrative—as a result of which inefficiency and corruption have become widespread, have driven a bewildered and bitterly disillusioned population to listen to the propaganda disseminated from Amman and to hope desparingly that a change of régime may bring about the many improvements which the present rulers of Syria have proved themselves quite incapable of carrying out."

Thus this section of the community—perhaps 50 per cent. or more—would accept unquestioningly a change of régime, though out of self interest rather than conviction; and their support, seldom more than lukewarm, diminishes in proportion to the increase in the efforts of the police to keep the movement in check. The number of extremists and revolutionaries is very small indeed.

45. The tribal leaders, however, are less apathetic, and it is to them that King Abdullah would look in the first place if he were to stage a *coup d'Etat*. Considering themselves the true aristocracy of the country, their dislike of the Syrian politicians is even greater than that of the townsmen, and the treatment they have received from the Government cannot be expected to have increased their loyalty

to Damascus. Not unnaturally, they expect King Abdullah, or for that matter any of the other candidates, to lend a more sympathetic ear to their problems. In general, it might be said that most of the Syrian tribes are supporters of King Abdullah and would welcome a Greater Syria. The following are believed to be the staunchest adherents to the royalist cause: in the north, the Mawali, Wulda, Baggara, Afadla, Beni Zeid and Khrossa; in the west, the Hadidiyin, and in the east the Ageidat. But a major tribe which opposes the scheme is the Ruwallah, whose leader, Amir Fawwaz Ibn Shaalan, has not only inherited from his grandfather, the Amir Nuri, the traditional tribal link with Ibn Sa'ud but is also connected by marriage with him. On the 8th September, 1947, a tribal conference was held under him at Palmyra, at which a resolution was passed denouncing the Greater Syria project, signed by other "deputies and heads of the tribes of the Syrian Republic." It is not known, however, which tribes were represented.

46. The Druze are, on the whole, supporters of King Abdullah, and, in the event of an invasion of Syria by Transjordanian troops, could be expected to give them armed support. Intense dislike of the Central Government and hatred of the French have, over a period of years, tended to direct their orientation towards Amman rather than Damascus. Furthermore, they have not forgotten the protection which King Abdullah afforded to Sultan Pasha al Atrash between 1925 and 1938. Druze support for King Abdullah was amply demonstrated in July, 1941, at the time of the Allied entry into Syria (see para. 31). In that month numerous Druze leaders visited him, asking that their territory be annexed to Transjordan, and surreptitious visits to Amman are believed to have continued ever since, although many Druze (with the fate of Suleiman Murshid before their eyes) are now busily denying Abdullah. In July, 1946 a pamphlet calling on the Druze to rise against the Syrian Government and fight for Abdullah was circulated. One of the most influential bodies of opinion in the Jebel Druze favouring the establishment of a "Greater Syria" is the League of National Action. In April, 1947, it claimed some 4,000 members drawn in the main from the leading families. The League professes to be indifferent to the régime which should govern a united Syria—Republican or

Monarchist—but is strongly opposed to foreign imperialism or Zionism, an attitude which, in theory (but not in practice) places it among the antagonists of a Hashimite "Greater Syria," for the belief that His Majesty's Government are assisting Abdullah in his plans is universal. In addition to the League of National Action, there is a loosely-organised, but widely-supported, royalist party which has the tacit backing of Sultan Pasha al-Atrash. Economically, of course, the Druze would have little to gain from an alliance with Transjordan, although certain of them may well imagine that what they believe to be the bottomless purse of the British taxpayer would provide them, through King Abdullah, with generous assistance. The opponents of the "Greater Syria" project are few, composed mostly of the protégés of the Damascus Government, which is believed to provide funds to combat royalist activity.

47. Like the Jebel Druze, the Hauran may be considered as an area which is strongly in favour of a Hashimite "Greater Syria." The San Remo frontiers (see para. 5) were not welcomed by the Hauranis, who have many ties of relationship with the villages in the Ajlun district on the Transjordan side of the frontier, and with Galilee (which absorbs much of the otherwise idle agricultural labour in the winter months). But it must be remembered that the Hauran has been for centuries the granary of Damascus. The Hauranis have shown an equal dislike for the French as for the Damascus bureaucracy, and are constantly complaining that they can never get Government jobs (although, in fact, there are practically no Hauranis fit to hold them. Amin Nazif, an ex-Haurani, does, however, hold a fairly high post in the administration.) As in the Jebel Druze, the Allied entry into Syria was used as the pretext for numerous petitions from the Hauran leaders requesting union with Transjordan.

48. Another stronghold of pro-royalist opinion is the Syrian Army, approximately a half of whose officer corps is considered likely to support a "Greater Syria." Although there are a few older officers, led by Lt.-Col. Abdul Wahab Hakim, who favour rebellion against the republican régime, the junior ranks would be most likely to instigate a *coup d'Etat* designed to overthrow the Damascus Government. But their motive in so doing would be primarily to improve their conditions—for

most of them are far from satisfied with their terms of service and general welfare—and not out of loyalty to Abdullah, their nationalist outlook prejudicing them in the main against a scheme widely believed to be instigated by a colonial power. The rank and file, poorly paid and clothed, could be expected to follow their lead. Although there have been many rumours of an impending *coup* in conjunction with Abdullah's plans, there is no evidence to show that such a rising is imminent.

49. The Syrian Christians are believed to be almost unanimously in favour of the "Greater Syria" movement (see para. 42), imagining that in its realisation they would have British protection in a Muslim-ruled country. They are not, however, likely to risk jeopardising their good relations with the Government by supporting it openly.

50. It is difficult to assess the strength of the opposition to the movement. In Damascus and the larger towns the leaders of the principal political groups, from the republican National Bloc to the Ikhwan al-Muslimin and the Muslim Youth Organisations, are all antagonistic to the scheme. The Communist Party, in particular, is strongly opposed to it. A violent condemnation of the project was issued in a statement made by the Central Committees of the Syrian and Lebanese parties on 5th March, 1945. In addition, there is a noticeable antipathy towards King Abdullah himself among many Syrians, who would be more willing to support some other Arab prince (see para. 40.)

51. The Syrian Government view the "Greater Syria" question from two aspects: as a clash of personal ambitions between King Abdullah and the Syrian politicians, and as a British (and also a Zionist) manoeuvre, despite all our disclaimers. In addition, they realise the incompatibility between a Syria completely independent and a Transjordan bound to His Majesty's Government by a restrictive treaty. It is not surprising, therefore, that they are uncompromisingly hostile to the idea of a monarchist "Greater Syria"⁽¹⁴⁾. This hostility is heightened by the long-standing friendship between Shukri

⁽¹⁴⁾ On 26th February, 1945, however, the President stated that he would welcome a Greater Syria, provided that the régime were republican, Damascus remained the capital, Zionist infiltration were obviated, the entity and independence of the Lebanon were respected and the change were brought about by the free choice of the population.

Quwatli and Ibn Sa'ud, who is naturally hostile towards Hashimite ambitions. In January, 1945, Shukri visited the King at Mecca, where he appears to have been well received. During the crisis which developed in May, 1945, between the Syrians and the French, Ibn Sa'ud was in frequent touch with Shukri and gave him much advice. A statement summing up the Government's views on "Greater Syria" was made by Khaled al Azm, Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs, in a debate in the Chamber on 26th November, 1946. The gist of this statement was that "the actions of responsible people" in Transjordan were contrary to the principles of international law and to the Charter of the Arab League, which required that every State should respect the form of rule existing in other member states, and should not interfere in their internal affairs; that such actions violated the spirit of co-operation and friendship on which the Charter of the League was based; and that Syria, an independent sovereign state, could not accept union with a less free country: she had chosen a republican form of government and wished to adhere to this system. This statement was unanimously approved. Other speakers in the debate, including a Druze, an Alawite and a tribal deputy, had described Transjordan as being still under the heel of the colonisers and therefore unfit even to be annexed to Syria. On 27th August, 1947, the Syrian and Lebanese Presidents met and issued an official communiqué expressing their "surprise and disapproval" at King Abdullah's latest manifesto (see para. 37) for its interference in the affairs of the two republics, its attack on the régime in force in them, and finally, its violation of the League Pact and the principle of international law. Two days earlier Jamil Mardam had made a press statement in which he said that Syria would fight against Abdullah's scheme because it was "Zionist and imperialist and aims at the partition of Palestine and the establishment therein of a Jewish State." But he also emphasised that Syria would welcome the annexation of Transjordan to Syria, "because it is part thereof"—a reaffirmation of the President's attitude in 1945 (see note on p. 13).

52. The estrangement of Syria from Transjordan, which has arisen as a result of the "Greater Syria" controversy, has prevented the establishment of a diplomatic representation between the two coun-

tries. The Syrian Government's coldness towards Transjordan was amply demonstrated at King Abdullah's Coronation. Not only did they not send a delegation to attend the ceremony, but they appear to have been at pains to prevent other Syrians attending⁽¹⁷⁾.

Reactions in Lebanon

53. The bulk of the Lebanese Christians are opposed to the Greater Syria project, although many, as in Syria, hope that its realisation would ensure British protection and the grant of special privileges to the Christian community. This view is held, in particular, by ex-President Emile Eddé, who has a considerable Maronite following. There is, however, a faction of Lebanese Christians (i.e. those opposed to the present régime and still, generally speaking, pro-French) who have come to look with favour on the scheme, since they anticipate that it would lead to the creation of a Christian Little Lebanon in which they would be able to get back into power. The Syrian National Party (see paras. 20-22), whose declared policy has always been the re-union of 'geographical' Syria, originated in Lebanon. Nahmi Tabet, its deputy leader, is believed to have admitted that, while the party does not advocate Abdullah as King, if presented with a Hashimite Greater Syria as a *fait accompli*, they would support the new régime⁽¹⁸⁾. The Party's leader, Antun Saadeh, returned to the Lebanon at the beginning of March, 1947 from a seven-years exile in the Argentine. Although his rash speeches have incurred the wrath of the Lebanese Government, and he is now in hiding, his followers are claimed to number some 15,000, from the Christian, Muslim and Druze communities.

54. The largest section of the Lebanese community favourably disposed towards the Greater Syria scheme are the Sunni Muslims (see para. 3) many of whom have always regarded Lebanon as a part of Syria. In addition, there is a strong irredentist feeling among the inhabitants of the "four cazas" (see para. 13) and royalist propaganda has been evident in the Ba'albek area. The Shi'as in the

⁽¹⁷⁾ It is also noteworthy that the Syrian President did not include Transjordan in the list of Arab States to which he sent a formal notification of Syria's independence. Abdullah was much upset at being overlooked in this manner.

⁽¹⁸⁾ The party's shifting attitude towards Abdullah is further illustrated by the fact that in July 1942 some of its representatives approached him with the suggestion that he should become their candidate for the Syrian throne!

Mohafazat of South Lebanon (see Map No. 3) who adopted a more reserved attitude towards Arab Nationalism than the Sunnis, have been similarly cautious in their support of "Greater Syria," but many of them realise that they cannot exist without the most intimate links with Syria and the other Arab countries and are, therefore, not opposed to the scheme.

55. The most violent criticism of the scheme has come from the Beirut press. The pro-French and pro-Soviet newspapers have condemned King Abdullah and his advisers in vehement terms, while the nationalist papers have attacked the project on the grounds that it would probably result in an expansion of Zionist influence in the Middle East. The organs reflecting Christian opinion have, however, adopted a more neutral attitude. On the 5th February, 1947 *L'Orient* even published a long article, suggesting that the project would not necessarily be unwelcome to the Lebanese provided that the Lebanon remained independent. Nevertheless, the extent to which the bulk of the press has exacerbated an already strained relationship between Lebanon and Transjordan points to the conclusion that such action may have been deliberately fostered by Communist and even Soviet circles.

56. The Government's attitude to the scheme was defined by the then Minister for Foreign Affairs, Philippe Tacla, in the Lebanese Chamber on 13th November, 1946. He said that, having joined the Arab League, the constitution of which was based on mutual collaboration and respect for the boundaries of the member states, there was no reason for the Lebanon to discuss the "Greater Syria" project. "We do not want a Greater Syria of any kind," he said, but later stressed the excellent relations between Syria and Lebanon. There are, however, known to be a number of Ministers and ex-Ministers, (including, particularly, ex-Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Kerameh) who are not hostile to the scheme. Lebanese reactions to King Abdullah's statements have already been mentioned (see paras. 34-35), but it seems most unlikely that Abdullah now includes Lebanon in any plans he may have for the modification of the existing Syrian frontiers.

Reactions in the Arab World

(a) Palestine

57. Arab support of the Greater Syria project is qualified by the hostility with which the Mufti and his party regard

Abdullah and by the fear, shared by most Arabs (with the exception of those in the Tulk'arm area), that Abdullah is anxious to permit controlled Jewish settlement in Transjordan. But the new Arab State might eventually agree to align itself with Transjordan. The Jewish attitude has not been clearly defined. Most Jews have been too concerned with their own immediate problems to give the scheme much thought, while many doubtless consider its realisation (even in the modified form of a union between Syria and Transjordan) unlikely, at least in the immediate future. The Jews would, of course, strongly resent any régime which impinged too closely on their rights, but a stable Arab bloc with its own government, though a potential source of danger, might well suit them better than a dissatisfied and highly inflammable community lacking full political rights. They were even prepared to give qualified support to Nuri's scheme for an Arab Federation to include Palestine (see para. 28), as this would have given them, in effect, a wider field of action for their financial and commercial projects. There is, indeed, no certainty that they would unanimously oppose a Greater Syria, and Eliahu Sassoon, Shertok's chief advisor on Arab matters, is believed to favour the scheme.

(b) *Iraq*

58. The historical background to Syro-Iraqi relations has already been discussed (see paras. 24-29.) The treaty between Transjordan and Iraq, ratified at Amman on 31st March, 1947, might be considered as a preliminary to the fulfilment of Abdullah's plan for uniting Syria and Transjordan. This treaty may be said to have been conceived in Amman rather than Baghdad, and it is certain that King Abdullah hoped to make its terms more far reaching. The Iraq Government regards the Greater Syria question and its present identification with King Abdullah as an embarrassment and would be much relieved if it were dropped, at any rate temporarily. Their reactions towards King Abdullah's manifesto (see para. 38) were cautious. Fadhil Jamali, Minister for Foreign Affairs, informed the Syrian Minister that Iraq would in no way interfere or cause trouble in Syria, but that her good offices were available to help Arab unity and friendliness. Saleh Jabr managed later to persuade the King not to provoke any more ill-feeling in the Arab world by the

issue of further manifestos. It must be remembered, however, that Nuri Pasha, has never entirely discarded his "Fertile Crescent Plan" (see para. 28-29) and still toys with the possibility of a union between Syria and Iraq. Among the politically minded in Iraq there is little enthusiasm for Greater Syria, partly because of the widespread belief that it is favoured by Great Britain. Great Britain's repeated declarations of neutrality on the subject have failed to convince Iraqis, and many of them are apprehensive of closer relations with Transjordan because of the military provisions of the Anglo-Transjordan Treaty. Iraq would probably welcome the realisation of Greater Syria provided that it was accompanied by revision of the treaty relations between Great Britain and Abdullah, but is unlikely to take active steps to bring it about.

The scheme has, not unexpectedly, been the butt of considerable criticism from the opposition group. Accusations levelled at Nuri Pasha for his alleged part in the scheme assumed such proportions in February, 1947, that the Government was obliged to issue an official communiqué denying that he had any connexion with it.

(c) *Egypt*

59. Any extension of Hashimite influence in the Middle East would be opposed in Egypt, where criticisms have already been made that Great Britain, by supporting the Hashimites, is undermining the stability of the Arab League. A report in the Egyptian press in February, 1947, that Transjordan troops were massing on the Syrian frontier (see para. 35) caused the Transjordan Government to send a strongly worded denial, emphasising that such unfounded reports would create ill-feeling between Egypt and Transjordan. The Government's attitude was stated on the 4th September, 1947, when the Acting Prime Minister announced at a press conference that Egypt would stand by the League Council resolution of November, 1946, (see para. 61) declaring the Greater Syrian question closed.

(d) *Saudi Arabia*

60. King Ibn Sa'ud's hostility towards the scheme and anxiety at the prospects of its realisation are well known. He is particularly apprehensive of the encroachment of a unified Hashimite state upon his kingdom after his death. On 24th April, 1947, he wrote a letter to Mr. Bevin in

which he referred to the Hashimite intrigues and asked for an assurance that the Iraqi-Transjordan treaty and the Greater Syria talk did not imply that His Majesty's Government were contemplating a change in the *status quo* in the Middle East. Mr. Bevin's reply (see para. 66) did not entirely succeed in tranquilising him; and what good effect it had was largely nullified by King Abdullah's latest outburst (see para. 38) which led Ibn Sa'ud to publish a communiqué describing Abdullah's action as treacherous, and deploring the split in the Arab world which he had created. The communiqué also referred to Abdullah's contravention of the Arab League Covenant, and re-affirmed Sa'udi Arabian support for Syrian independence.

(e) *Arab League*

61. The Greater Syria question was discussed at a meeting of the Arab League on 28th November, 1946, as the result of a request made by the Syrian Prime Minister that the League Council should take note of the efforts of the Transjordan Government to bring about a change of régime in Syria. After some rather acrimonious discussion a statement was issued by the League Council to the effect that each of the member states remained faithful to the League Covenant and would not dispute the independence or sovereignty of another member state, or attack the existing governmental régime. It was agreed that the matter should not be discussed further by the League. Azzam Pasha, Secretary-General to the League, is naturally unwilling to become involved in "Greater Syria" polemics, and is still less anxious to see an extension of Hashimite influence in the Middle East. The League Council's statement was greeted with delight in the Lebanese press, where it was stated that the curtain had been lowered on the Greater Syria scheme, because the Transjordan Foreign Minister had signed the motion adopted by all the Foreign Ministers rejecting the project.

Reactions elsewhere

(a) *Turkey*

62. The attitude of the Turkish Government has been to support the Greater Syria scheme as a means of attacking the Syrian Government, whose requests for the re-opening of the Hatay question (sanjak of Alexandretta) still rankle. When Abdullah visited Angora in January 1947,

to sign the Turco-Transjordan Treaty of Friendship, he disclaimed interest in the matter, an attitude which he may well have adopted in return for some Turkish promise of support for the Greater Syria scheme. But since his expressed intention has always been to work for the re-union of "geographical" Syria (which may well be taken to include the Hatay) he may well be anxious not to omit this district from his ultimate plans—a fact which the Turks are unlikely to overlook.

(b) *France*

63. Although two years ago the French were strongly opposed to the scheme (seeing in it the extension of British influence in the Levant to the detriment of their own interests), they are now more willing to accept a Greater Syria, since they feel that its establishment would result in the creation of a Little Lebanon in which they would be able to re-assert their own influence.

(c) *U.S.A.*

64. As support of the scheme would mean antagonising Ibn Sa'ud, the Americans are naturally unwilling to favour it in view of their considerable oil interests in Saudi Arabia. It is thought likely, however, that the U.S. Government would not oppose the scheme if it were brought about by the spontaneous desire of the peoples concerned.

(d) *U.S.S.R.*

65. The hostility of the Soviet Union towards the scheme needs no emphasis. It is regarded by the Russians as another example of British "imperialism" in the Middle East, while they also contend that its realisation would encourage the resistance of Turkey and Persia to Soviet demands. The Syrian and Lebanese Communist parties and the pro-Soviet Beirut newspapers have, indeed, been its most violent critics (see paras. 50 and 55).

(e) *His Majesty's Government*

66. His Majesty's Government have consistently maintained that the Greater Syria scheme is a matter of local Arab politics which does not concern them. Mr. Bevin, in his reply to King Ibn Sa'ud (see para. 60), stated: "His Majesty's Government, for their part, have at no time attempted to intervene, either directly or indirectly, in this project, for they have always held that they are not an interested party . . . It is a question for the Arabs to discuss among themselves, with a view

to finding the solution which may be considered most advantageous to the Arab World as a whole."⁽¹⁹⁾

Conclusions

67. Of the various possibilities, a reunion of Transjordan and Syria is the most likely form which a Greater Syria might take. Under King Abdullah such a Kingdom would have a precarious existence and would be looked upon with some alarm by the Lebanon, with embarrassment (and even annoyance) by Iraq and with intense hostility by Ibn Sa'ud, who might be tempted to seize the opportunity to annex what he claims to be his right, namely Aqaba and Ma'an. By creating a powerful Hashimite *bloc*, a Greater Syria in any form might result in the disruption of the Arab League, particularly as the chances of its establishment by peaceful means appear somewhat remote and its achievement by violence would cut across the provisions of the League constitution. In any case, Egypt's leadership of the League would be directly challenged. Economically, the creation of a Greater Syrian State would result in the abolition of trade and travel restrictions within the Syrian *bloc*, which would doubtless benefit thereby. On the other hand, trade with Egypt and Saudi Arabia might perforce be more restricted than under the present régime. The additional implications of the incorporation of Lebanon within this *bloc* are of course, numerous, the most obvious being the problem of reconciling the interests of Muslims and Christians in the new State. But the likelihood of this country becoming part of Greater Syria is now remote. King Abdullah may, however, be expected to make a determined attempt to annex the new Arab State in Palestine to Transjordan (see para. 36).

68. The basic difficulties of the Greater Syria project are well summarized by A. H. Hourani ("Syria and Lebanon," p. 269):—

"Before any such union could be established, a number of practical problems would have to be solved. They spring mainly from the division of geographical Syria into areas of British

⁽¹⁹⁾ A further denial of British interest in the Greater Syria Scheme was made in the House of Commons on 15th July, 1947.

and French influence. This division has led to the development of partly different systems of law, administration and education, and to cultural differences, which would cause serious difficulty both in the construction of a unified political system and in the successful working of it. What is more important still, the existence of four separate Governments for the last two decades has combined with the natural centrifugal tendency of Arab society to produce local ambitions and feeling and vested interests which it will not be easy to break down; the rivalry of families and dynasties is only one example of these ambitions and interests."

69. It implies no special reflection on the people of the Middle East that King Abdullah's lack of adequate financial resources seriously hampers his conduct of an effective campaign in favour of his schemes. Personally, moreover, he enjoys none of the prestige which his brother Faisal enjoyed, and it is not too much to say that the difficulties attending the realisation of a project so completely in harmony with the original aspirations of the Arab nationalists would disappear at the approach of a more acceptable sponsor. In theory, no one has a clearer title to lead the movement than Abdullah himself, as the eldest surviving son of King Husain and also as one closely associated both before and after 1916 with the Arab revolt against the Turks. In spite of fierce opposition King Abdullah is unlikely to desist from his efforts. The following quotation from Meredith Townsend's essay "Asia and Europe," written at the end of the last century, seems especially applicable to Greater Syria:—

"None but those who have lived among Asiatics can understand how an oriental mind can brood over an idea. It is perhaps the most marked distinction between him and the Western man: the European thinks, the oriental only reflects, and if left to himself the idea turned over endlessly in his mind hardens into the consistency of steel."

Research Department,
Foreign Office,
10th January, 1948.

APPENDIX

GREATER SYRIA

"King Abdullah's White Paper"

PREAMBLE

The question of Greater Syria or the reunion of natural Syria is not an exotic contrivance but a basic national problem deriving from the country's geographical and historical position, from the nation's will, from the Covenant made some thirty years ago and from the decisions taken at various and numerous patriotic conferences and meetings.

It is certainly a regrettable set-back to the Arab cause that this blessed call should be resisted seditiously and unjustly by a provincial scheme which resembles a tomb of which the existence is sterile and its interior is complete darkness; a tomb which looks at life with the same eye as it looks at decayed limbs.

In order to escape from the general field of contest, the separationists have slandered and spread many disturbing rumours about this innocent call. They have gone far in preaching that a connection with Transjordan would not bring forth anything but enchainment, and are vehemently objecting to the reunion of the two countries. The separationists well know that, by not responding to the call to union or federation, they dismember their own country in order to present portions to those who initiated the partition. Do they not realise that their pretence is inconsistent not only with the natural endeavour of all living nations having a common object, but also with their own acts and declarations? Did they not call for unity when the bare sword of the mandate was hanging over their heads? Did not the nation make a mutual covenant of unity when all the Syrian provinces, both coastal and internal, in the north and in the south, were under the mandatory rule?

Is there any justification for abandoning the national covenant and severing spiritual and political relations with one of the country's dearest and bravest provinces for the simple reason that it has removed the mandate, escaped the Zionist threat, and acquired full independence? Can it be anything but lack of a sense of duty that one should ignore and reject the extended hand of one's brother and the call for a meeting in a common house on

soil soaked with the sweat, tears and blood of the forefathers?

We would not be far from the truth if we asked, tentatively and with due regard to the difference in the cases, whether Egypt would disapprove of the unity of the Nile Valley because the Sudan, for example, was governed under the 1899 treaty? Is not Egypt holding to her national covenant and doing everything in her power to realise the unity of the Valley, endeavouring thereby to put matters right? The difference between the two cases is so obvious that it cannot be denied: Transjordan and Syria are one country and the Transjordan Treaty is not that of 1899. The Transjordan Treaty is at the disposal of those who would read it and make a fair and impartial comparison. The Transjordan Treaty is far better than the treaties of the other Arab States. The creation of connexions aiming at securing the welfare of both the State and the nation does not curtail or diminish national rights acquired internationally and within the framework of the United Nations Charter.

Is it true that the natural unity of Syria would be inconsistent with Arab unity? Is not the unity of Syria a natural part of Arab unity, in which it should be placed so as to appear before the world in a better light? Is it true that the difference in the form of government in the different provinces justifies the continuation of partition with its resultant aloofness, between the inhabitants of the same country? Who denies that the form of government is to be decided upon by the nation itself after the reunion? Who can deny that political union is not interdicted by any form of government? Finally, who can deny that the country—with the exception of dear Palestine—has now acquired, from an international point of view, her unlimited freedom, so that the nation can decide for itself all these problems? Furthermore, should the Covenant of the Arab League—which is a limited Covenant of voluntary co-operation—be a means of freezing the Arab cause and crystallising it in a final shape? Is not this Covenant a beginning, and not an end, in accordance

with the terms of which the Arabs can go beyond mere co-operation to establish wider relationships and form a stronger body? Is it right that the expression of national aspirations in any Arab country or the zealous call to unity of our Syrian provinces should be met with indifference and rejection in order to please those who are never satisfied unless they are trampling on our dear country?

Finally, is it true that, in her most sacred struggle, Transjordan is only seek-

ing her own advantage and benefit? Has not Transjordan, from the very start, called for the continuance of the Arab struggle with no aim except to lead the nation until all its goals are attained? Has it been forgotten that Transjordan has always been and still is ready to submit to the nation's will before and after all?

The answers to all these questions will be found in the written documents and unknown facts contained in this book. (Not printed.)

E 2603/2603/89

No. 2

SYRIA: ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1947

Mr. Broadmead to Mr. Bevin.

(Received 25th February)

(No. 19)
Sir,

Damascus,

4th February, 1948

I have the honour to transmit herewith the annual report on Syria for 1947, which has been written by Mr. Male, third secretary at His Majesty's Legation.

I have, &c.

P. M. BROADMEAD.

Enclosure in No. 2

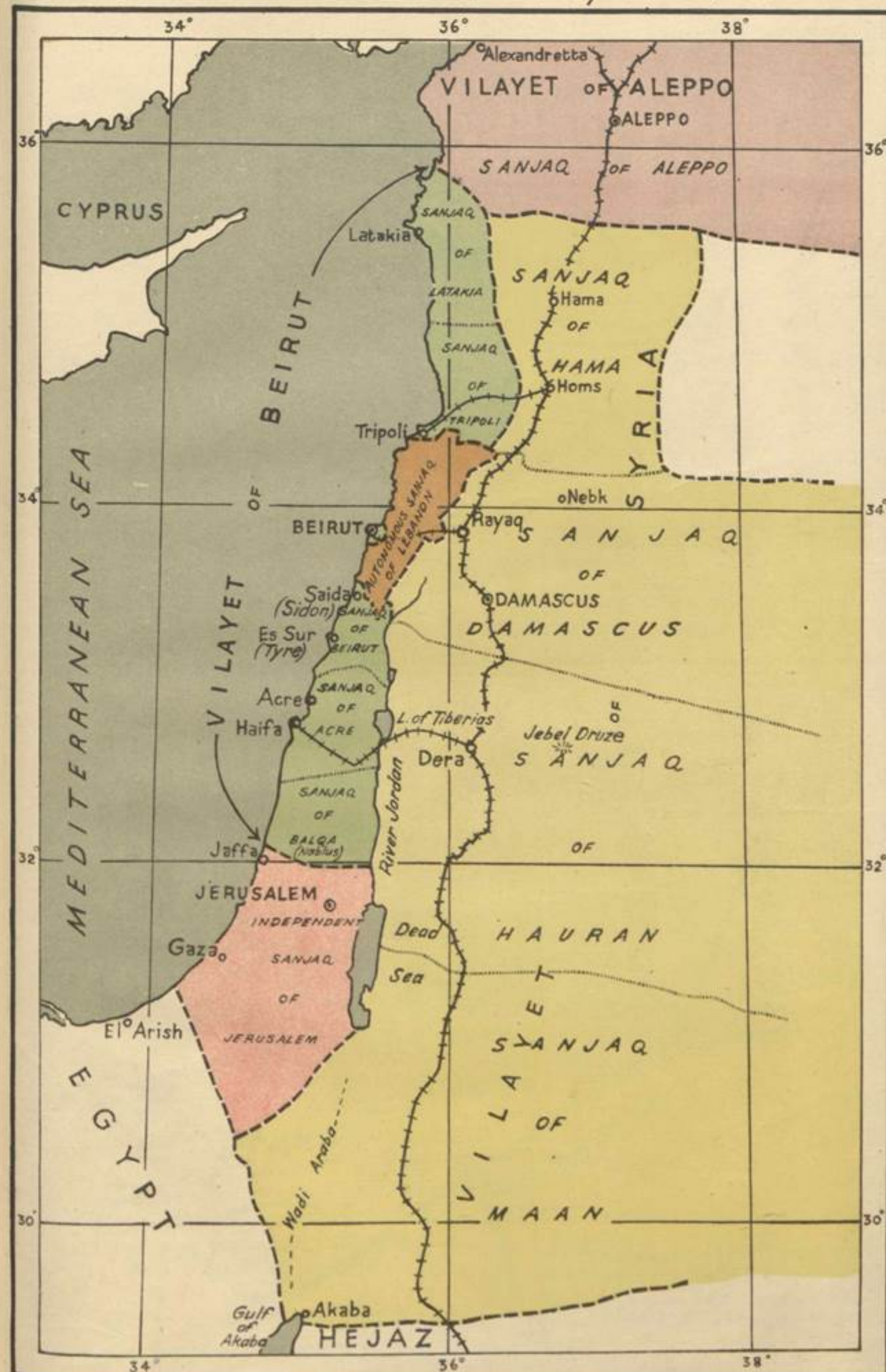
Annual Political Review of Syria, 1947

In the closing days of 1946 Jamil Mardam became Prime Minister in succession to Saadullah Jabri, and has held this appointment throughout the year. The latter half of 1946 under the Jabri Government was remarkable for the progressive consolidation of an independent Syrian Administration; but in 1947 there has been no comparable sustained interest in internal administrative affairs on the part of the Government, since Jamil's interests are largely in the realm of external politics; in April he became Minister for Foreign Affairs in addition to Prime Minister.

The first elections to Parliament in an autonomous Syria were held in July. The elections were conducted on a one-degree basis, an innovation accepted by the Government as a result of demonstrations by students and a vigorous press campaign. The elections were by and large fairly conducted, and the results were illuminating. They represented a trial of strength between the two outstanding personalities in the country, Shukri Kuwatli and Jamil

Mardam. In the first round of the elections the President's supporters were defeated by the Prime Minister's; in "ballotage" operations for the undecided seats the President's candidates were more successful than the Prime Minister's. In Damascus considerable pressure was applied to secure this result. Both men desired a Chamber which would vote solidly for them in 1948 when the presidential elections are held. In the result, however, neither has a majority and an uneasy truce has been patched up, though the key posts for internal security of Minister of the Interior and Minister of Defence are held by the President's henchmen. In the last session of 1947 a Bill passed, by their common agreement, through its first stage, which, if it is finally accepted, will permit election for a second consecutive presidential term. The new Parliament elected in July is more than ever a group of individuals, for the party system suffered a further decline during the year, when the old National *bloc* (the group founded by the President under the mandate with the object of securing Syria's independence), which was the only party in the British parliamentary sense, was heavily defeated in the elections as a result of the disagreement between the President and the Prime Minister. On 20th June Saadullah Jabri, last year's Prime Minister, a figure of outstanding internal political importance and a strong party politician in the National *bloc*, died; and since his death no statesman has arisen capable of forming and maintaining a party.

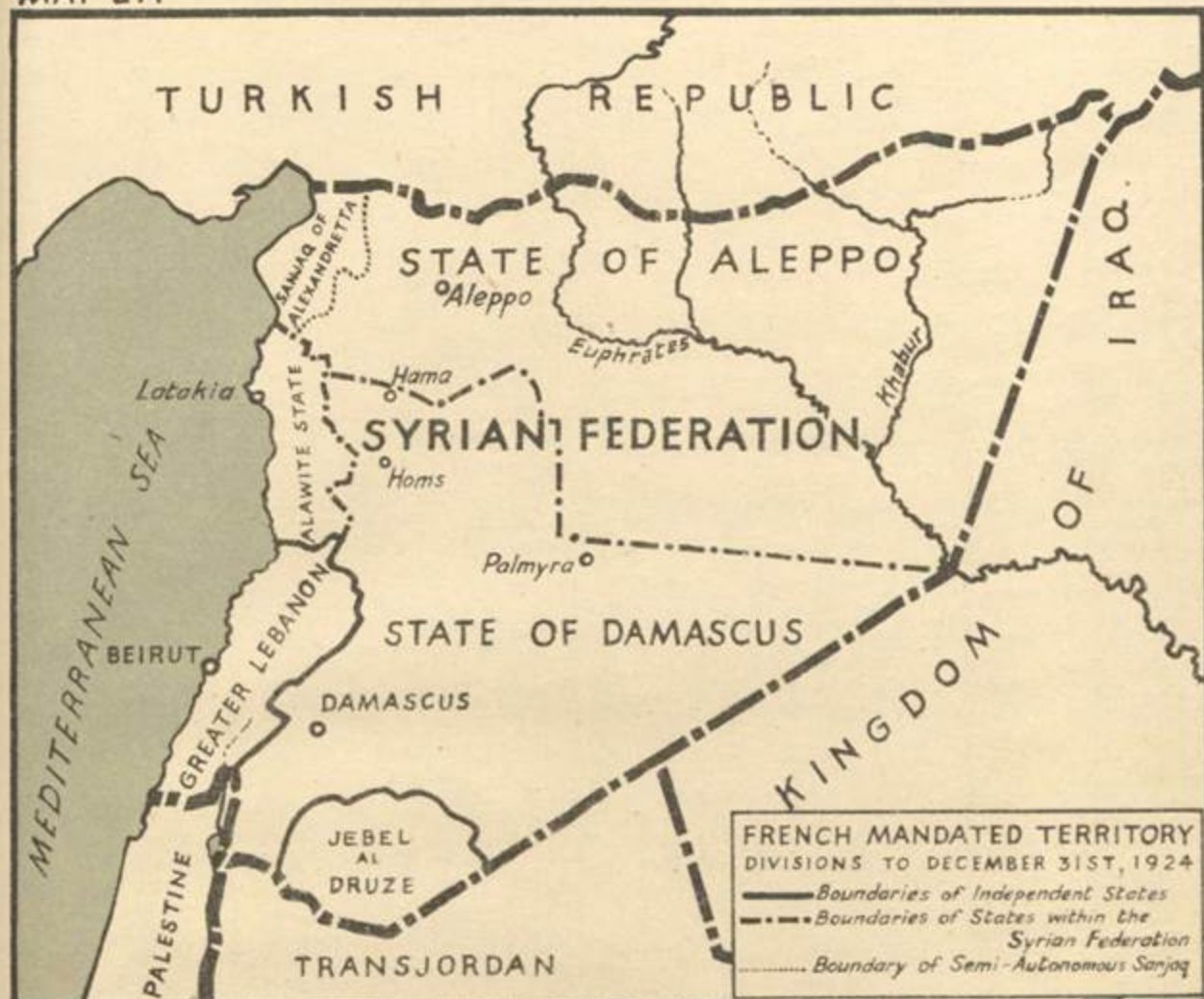
MAP I Turkish Administrative Districts in Syria and Palestine



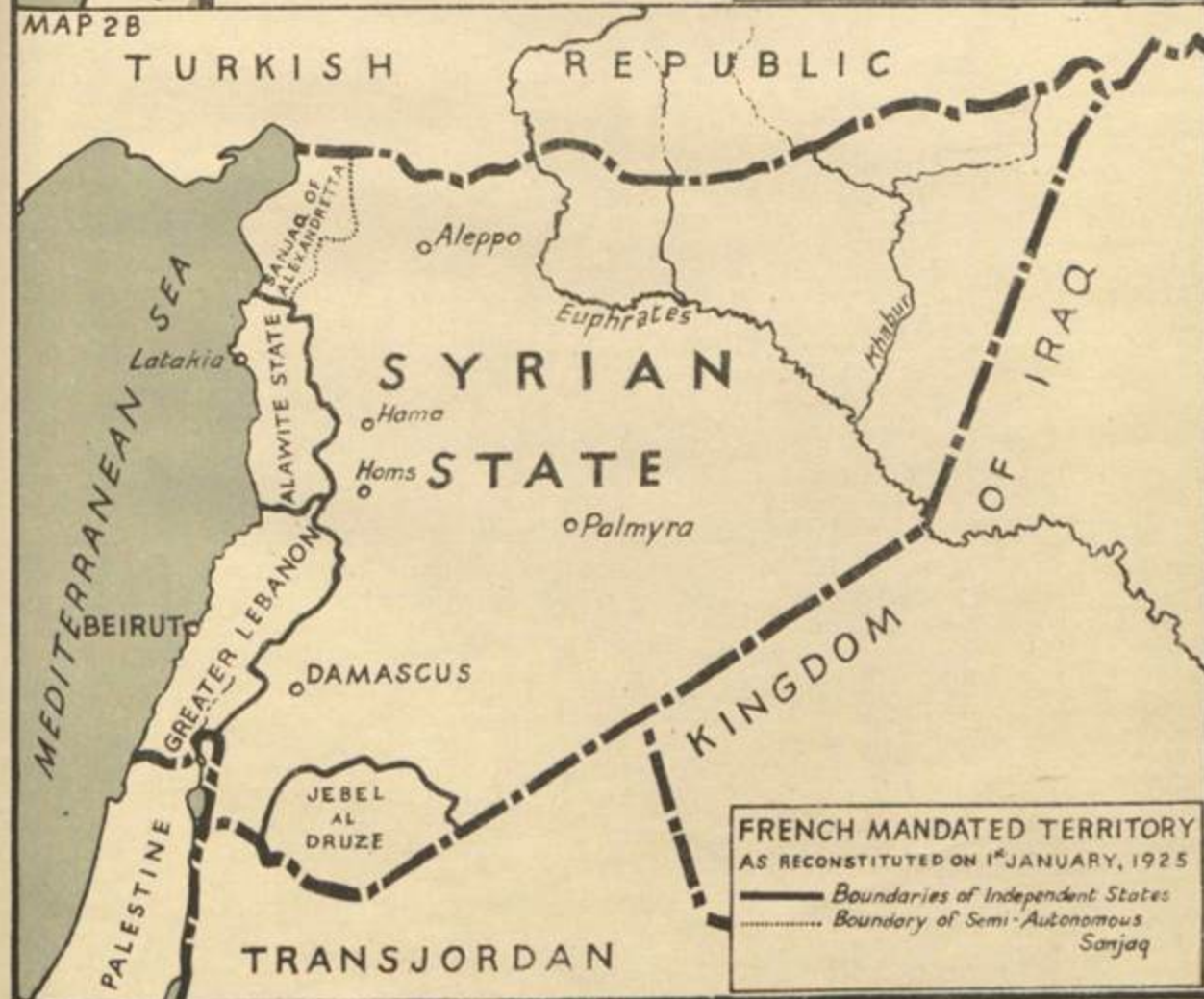
Adapted from map in "Palestine Royal Commission Report, 1937" by Research Dept. F.O. April 1947

50 40 30 20 10 0 50 100 MILES

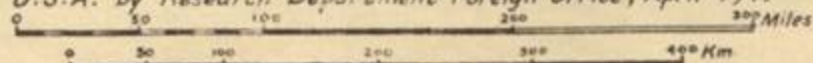
MAP 2A



MAP 2B



Adapted from map in "The Nationalist Crusade in Syria" by E. P. MacCallum, Foreign Policy Assoc. U.S.A. by Research Department Foreign Office, April 1947



MAP 3

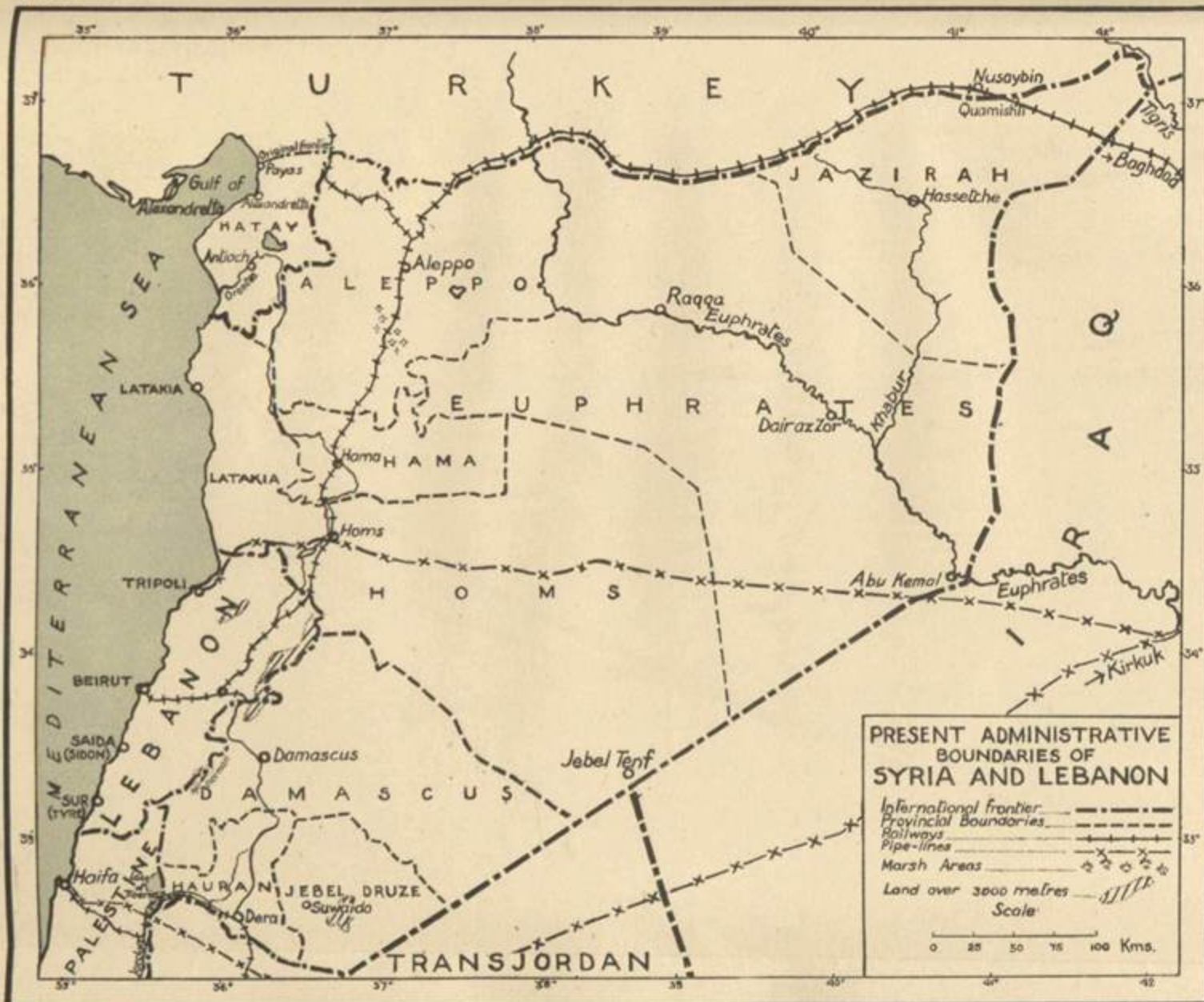


Adapted from map in "Syria and Lebanon" by A. H. Hourani, Oxford University Press, and from map attached to F.O. print E 1110/20/88 of 8th February, 1944, by RESEARCH DEPT. F.O. June, '47

0 10 20 30 40 50 MILES

1954 42566 P 154 200 2/4R (Ty, P)

MAP 4



Adapted from map in "Syria and Lebanon" by A.H. Hourani, Oxford University Press, by Research Dept. F.O., April 1947

Popular interest and clamour during the year has been directed on external affairs, moving in rapid succession from Hatay question early in the year to the Egyptian hearing at the United Nations, to Greater Syria in the middle of the year and, finally, Palestine from the time of the appointment of the United Nations Special Commission. King Abdullah's visit to Turkey to conclude a treaty at the end of 1946 made Syria apprehensive of encirclement; the King's impolitic action in leaving Turkish soil from the port of Alexandretta was interpreted as showing that he accepted the cession of the Hatay to Turkey in return for a secret agreement on Greater Syria. At a point in the negotiations with Egypt in the early part of the year, when an impasse had been reached, the Syrian and Lebanese Prime Ministers offered their good offices to seek a compromise. The offer was accepted, but the result was in the event nil. The motive underlying the offer would appear to be a genuine desire to compose the differences existing between the United Kingdom and the leading State in the Arab League; for on this relationship depended the extent to which public opinion in the other Arab States would in turn accept co-operation with Britain. From the Syrian point of view the breakdown of negotiations and the final stalemate at the United Nations has imposed on politicians the necessity of careful revision of their attitude to us, in order not to move outside the framework of Arab League policy.

Coincident with the end of the elections in August came a further call from King Abdullah for the unity of Syria with Transjordan. Within Syria there was an immediate reaction against this move: no Royalist candidate succeeded in the elections (for none dared openly to proclaim himself as such) and country-wide meetings were held in which the glorious unfettered freedom of Syria was contrasted with the bondage of Transjordan, the tool of the coloniser. The final word came from the President, who, in a widely publicised speech, recorded the achievement of Syria since her independence and concluded by offering that Transjordan, the part, should join Syria, the whole. This temporary rounding-off of an essentially national question left the way open for Syria to concentrate on the affairs of Palestine.

Throughout the period during which the United Nations Special Committee was preparing its report, Syrians were per-

suading themselves that all would come right in the end. On publication of the report the public were still confident in the justice of their case, for by now they identified their interests with those of Palestine. Proceedings in New York during the hearing were attentively followed, and the official British statements on policy for the termination of the mandate were on the whole well received. The decision of the Assembly in favour of partition came, therefore, as a shock, and was immediately followed by a strike and demonstrations in Damascus and Aleppo causing some deaths, and incidents occurred in which the American and French Legations were entered and their flags torn down. The demonstrators, who were unaware of a recent change of location of the Russian Legation, failed to find it whilst their enthusiasm ran high. Following the intervention of His Majesty's Charge d'Affaires to obtain the calling-off of the strike, tension in Damascus subsided. Blame for the incidents was laid on Communists (whose Damascus office had been gutted in the first day of the demonstrations), and the Minister of the Interior took the occasion to close down all Communist offices throughout the country. The temper of the country had been set by these preliminaries, which are thought to have been sponsored by the President, and wildly enthusiastic but unrealistic projects for raising, training and financing a liberation army appeared almost overnight and recruiting centres for volunteers were set up throughout the country. For all this, volunteers did not come forward in the expected numbers and contributions in money were equally backward. Underneath this show preparations on more solid lines were made: the Ministry of Defence placed contracts with Czechoslovakian and Belgian firms for the supply of armaments; General Taha el Hashimi was installed in an office in the Ministry of Defence, whence he administered the volunteers; the ex-British army camp at Qattanah near Damascus became a general training centre for picked bands of volunteers organised on a regional basis; Iraklis, Egyptians and Palestinians came into Syria for training; and a Military Conscription Bill was passed. Along the Palestinian frontier, where army units had for a short time been strengthened, there were minor incidents arising out of the uncertainty of the boundary in some places, but up till the end of the year there were no indications of men in large num-

bers infiltrating into Palestine. It seems probable that this decision to prepare Syria as the main base for future operations, though primarily dictated by military necessity, was accepted the more willingly by the President because it would give Syria a leading rôle *vis-à-vis* Transjordan and would provide in the future proof of Syria's valuable contribution to Arab aims. The extent to which suspicion and jealousy of Transjordan and to a lesser extent Iraq affect the internal affairs of Syria, and Syrian behaviour within the Arab League and towards Britain, cannot be over-emphasised.

In the field of foreign relations Syria's independence sat uneasily on her through the year. The corner-stone of her policy was strict conformity with the Arab League line, and her professed aims have been the furtherance of Arab and Moslem unity. Yet throughout the year her relations with Lebanon became more strained as a result of economic differences; her relations with Iraq have been relations of suspicion, and there is still no Iraqi Minister heading the diplomatic mission to Syria, nor is there any Transjordan representative at all. The U.S.S.R. is regarded with deep distrust, which was not lessened by the Russian *bloc* votes in favour of the partition of Palestine; the Syrians have been happy to agree to a further repatriation during the year of Armenians to Soviet Armenia. Relations with France have in some very small measure improved; the majority of the French schools have been permitted to reopen. But no free acceptance of things French can come about until the negotiations between Syria and the Lebanon and France on financial matters, including the currency backing, which proceeded in Paris for the latter quarter of the year, have been concluded. On the outcome of these discussions and the generosity of the French settlement will depend the extent to which the French are allowed once again to bring to Syria their cultural activities. During the year there were accredited to Syria the representatives of Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Greece, Sweden and Italy. Mr. P. S. Scrivener, as first British Minister to Syria (without the Lebanon), presented his letters on 11th April; Mr. P. M. Broadmead succeeded him and presented his letters on 8th December.

Syria's relations with Great Britain have been, in view of the prevailing xenophobia, good. The President assured Mr.

Scrivener of Syria's desire to work in close co-operation with Britain in all matters not directly affecting Palestine, on which Syria reserved her attitude. The same point has been made to other members of the legation staff by officials of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and our advice and suggested course of action have been sought on several occasions. In spite of this the Syrian delegate on the Security Council, Faris Khoury, made perhaps the most forcible speech in support of the Egyptian case during the Anglo-Egyptian hearing; and during the hearing of the Corfu Channel complaint he abstained from voting on a legal technicality. In both instances the legation was assured that Faris Khoury had acted on his own initiative; and in the Egyptian case His Majesty's Minister was informed that he had directly contravened his instructions. None the less, Faris Khoury was not recalled from New York, and was referred to in speeches by members of the Government in terms of the highest praise.

Tribal control remained at a high level throughout the year, and the Government's internal security forces—the gendarmerie, police and tribal forces—undoubtedly increased in efficiency. The minorities were adequately protected, save in Aleppo following the United Nations decision on Palestine when Jewish buildings were looted and burnt, though without loss of life to the Jewish community. The situation in the Jebel Druze engaged the Government's attention from June till the end of the year. A dispute arose between the Attrash, the hereditary ruling family, and the Assali factions. In the first instance the dispute was concerned with appointments to Government posts in the Jebel, where the Assalis challenged the right of the Attrashes to provide all the higher officials. Later the dispute widened to include the question of Parliamentary representation, since in the elections all the successful candidates were Attrashes. There is no doubt that the Government intervened with subsidies to the anti-Attrash faction, which had some local successes in armed forays; and the refusal of the Government to validate the election of the Attrash Parliamentary candidates, over-riding the ruling of a Government commission, which had been appointed to supervise and report on the elections, prolonged the dissensions. In the event the Jebel had until the end of the year only one non-party Deputy in Parliament, whilst neither the Attrashes nor the Popular

Party were represented. Towards the end of the year, under the pressure of events in Palestine, a truce was patched up, a new Mohafez of Lebanese Druze extraction replaced the Emir Hassan Attrash, and the Jebel Druze became the Mohafezat of Soueida and was thus integrated with the normal Syrian administrative system. The settlement is, however, uneasy, and the Attrashes have kept in close contact with King Abdullah and His Majesty's Legation.

In the economic field the cost of living remained fairly constant until the last quarter of the year, when an abnormally low grain harvest in combination with currency uncertainties caused prices to advance appreciably. Cases of cholera in Southern Syria were announced in mid-

December, and the consequent restriction on movement pushed prices further up. The epidemic was rapidly and energetically controlled and Syria was declared free of cholera in early January. Prices were further influenced by the decision of the Socony Vacuum Oil Company, the country's main supplier, to cut supplies of fuel to Syria in mid-November. The decision was reversed before it was due to be implemented, but the country as a whole did not credit the explanation of a world fuel shortage given for the proposed cut, and saw in it a manoeuvre to force the country into accepting the Trans-Arabian Pipe-Line Company's request for way-leave through Syria, agreement for which had not been granted by the end of the year.

E 2920/297/89

No. 3

SYRIA: ECONOMIC SUMMARY FOR DECEMBER 1947 AND JANUARY 1948

Mr. Broadmead to Mr. Bevin. (Received 3rd March)

(No. 28 E.)

His Majesty's Minister at Damascus presents his compliments to His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and has the honour to transmit Economic Summary for December 1947 and January 1948 from the Commercial Secretary, Damascus.

Damascus, 18th February, 1948.

Enclosure in No. 3

Economic Summary for December 1947 and January 1948

General

The financial negotiations with France and their effect on the general economic relations between Syria and the Lebanon continued to be the main topic of interest during the two months under review. For a short period, however, attention was directed to combating an outbreak of cholera, the first suspected cases being reported on 19th December in the village of Mahajjeh, near Damascus. Measures were taken immediately to restrict movement of population to and from affected areas, and arrangements made for inoculating the entire population. In all forty-four cases

of cholera were reported, of which eighteen proved fatal. No further cases were reported after 29th December, and Syria was officially declared free of cholera as from 17th January.

Trade

The unsatisfactory progress of the negotiations with France has continued to cause an all-round decline in trade. Local markets have become very dull, while export trade has been greatly restricted owing to the Government's policy of directing exports to scarce currency areas. In this latter connexion the Minister of National Economy has decreed that licences will be granted for the export of 37 tons of cotton yarn on condition that full payment is obtained in scarce currency. Similar decrees have been issued covering lentils, beans and peas, while numerous other export commodities formerly uncontrolled are no longer permitted to be exported except under an export licence.

Import trade suffered a severe setback on 26th January, when all banking transactions in foreign exchange were suspended, and since 3rd February—when the purchase of sterling on the "free market" became no longer possible in consequence of the Treasury order prohibiting payment for United Kingdom exports from

"French Account No. 2"—import trade has virtually ceased.

Agriculture

Although no details are yet available concerning the total area under cultivation, it is reported from official sources that the grain acreage sown this year exceeds that of 1947. Rainfall throughout the country, especially in the grain-producing areas, has been very satisfactory and prospects of a good harvest are very promising.

Finance

Progress towards a settlement of the financial negotiations with France remained a matter of speculation—notwithstanding the frequent unconfirmed press statements to the effect that an early agreement on all outstanding problems was expected—until the latter part of January, when it became apparent that the French proposals, although somewhat modified compared with those originally put forward, were still unacceptable to Syria. Considerable anxiety prevailed lest the Lebanon should sign an agreement to which Syria was not prepared to be a signatory, and frequent discussions took place between the two Governments. On 31st January, the date fixed for signing the joint agreement, the Syrian Government announced that it was not prepared to accept the terms, whereupon the French decided to postpone final signature for a further week in the hope that Syria would eventually give way. On 6th February, as Syria was still determined not to accept the conditions offered, the Lebanon alone signed the agreement with France. The agreement has yet to be ratified by the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies; meanwhile the Syrian Government is continuing to explore every possible avenue through meetings with leading local commercial and industrial organisations to influence the Lebanese Government into a joint break-away from the franc and establishing their own national bank and currency. In this connexion two Egyptian financial experts, one of whom Dr. Abdul Hakim Rifai, arrived in Damascus on 2nd February at the invitation of the Syrian Government to advise on the establishment of an independent Syrian currency and the backing necessary.

The first official statement regarding the negotiations with France was made by the

Syrian Prime Minister at a press conference on 2nd February, a translation⁽¹⁾ of which is attached.

In an exclusive interview given to *Alef Ba* on 8th February, the Minister of Finance is reported to have disclaimed all knowledge of the recently reported offer by Tapline to make an advanced payment of 60 million dollars, against eventual royalties, as cover for Syria's currency. He added that he "saw no need for such a large amount of foreign currency for use as cover and, furthermore, Syria did not require loans or foreign currency to cover the present note issue." "In normal years Syria could acquire sufficient coverage from exports." "Syria could sell surplus wheat abroad for 35 million pounds and could buy gold exchange abroad at £Syr.18 a gold pound." He saw no need for linking the Syrian currency with the Egyptian, but what he would like to see was a common currency circulating in all Arab countries whose monetary systems were not tied up with those of foreign Powers. He said that he "would like Syria to establish its own bank." "The Banque de Syrie et du Liban," he pointed out, "had been organised with a capital of £Syr.600,000 and very little gold cover." He was convinced that the separation of the Syrian and Lebanese currencies would lead to a separation of the economic interests of the two countries, but in any event it need not necessarily prevent their continuing commercial exchanges on a new basis in accordance with the change in their relative positions. The Minister stated, "From to-day on we shall sell our produce abroad for scarce currency needed for securing our own currency and economy, but this should not be interpreted as meaning that we wish to harm the Lebanon." The Minister of Finance concluded his interview by saying, "the economic agreements with the Lebanon would remain valid until 31st March. This would allow time in which to discuss the liquidation of 'mutual interests.' Consideration would have to be given to the question of a Syrian port if the customs of the two countries were to be separated."

Following the devaluation of the franc on 26th January immediate instructions were issued by the Foreign Exchange Office—operating under the administration of the Banque de Syrie et du Liban—to all banks in Syria to suspend until further notice all exchange transactions in foreign

⁽¹⁾ Not printed.

currencies. At the same time the Banque de Syrie et du Liban fixed the official rate of the franc in relation to the Syrian pound at 97.83 francs as against the former rate of 54.38 francs. A week later (2nd February) the Banque de Syrie et du Liban, on instructions from their Beirut office, suspended further credit and discount business. This step coincided with instructions issued by the Lebanese authorities to stop any further transfers of currency to Syria, which resulted in all banking business being brought to a standstill. As the other local banks either have credits with the Banque de Syrie et du Liban on which they draw when necessary, or obtain advances from their offices in Beirut, they were likewise obliged to suspend further credit and discount business in order to preserve such funds as they held to meet any sudden demand on deposit accounts. This state of affairs lasted for a week, when the Banque de Syrie et du Liban, at the request of the Syrian Government, were obliged to resume normal local credit and discount transactions.

The texts of three legislative decrees were published in the press on 11th February providing for (a) the abolition of the joint Exchange Committee, composed of representatives of the French Exchange Office and the Syrian and Lebanese States; (b) the establishment of an independent Syrian Exchange Control Committee, composed of the controller of the department of issue, as president, and representatives of the Ministers of Finance and National Economy; (c) the establishment of an independent Foreign Exchange Office under the administration of the Minister of Finance or one or more banks designated by the Minister of Finance. The office will be responsible for fixing the buying and selling rates for foreign currencies in accordance with instructions of the representative of the Minister of Finance; (d) granting the Minister of Finance authority to guarantee the difference of the cover for the Syrian note issue resulting from the devaluation of the franc, and to issue Treasury bonds without interest, and (e) transactions in French francs to be subject to the conditions applicable to all other foreign currencies (formerly transactions in French francs were restricted).

According to figures published in the *Official Gazette* the total Syrian currency in circulation on 15th January was £Syr. 175,500,000 in respect of which the

department of issue (Banque de Syrie et du Liban) held the following cover:—

	£ Syrian
Coinage	2,471,085
Foreign currency	171,858,443
Advance to Government	1,170,472
Total	175,500,000

Gold Prices.—The weekly prices ruling in Damascus for the sovereign during December and January were as follows:—

	£ Syrian
3rd December	47.10-48.00
10th December	45.60-46.35
17th December	45.20-46.10
24th December	45.10-45.50
31st December	45.30-45.50
7th January	45.40-45.75
14th January	46.50-46.75
21st January	48.40-49.20
28th January	48.75-50.25

There were no quotations for the 5-tola bar during the period.

Budget

In the summary for November details were given of the draft budget for 1948 presented to Parliament by the Minister of Finance. The budget with the accompanying budget law was passed by the Chamber of Deputies on 20th January, and became effective on 31st January on signature by the President of the Republic and publication in the *Official Gazette*. Details of expenditure and estimated revenue of the budget as finally passed, together with comparative figures for last year, are attached.⁽¹⁾ Cuts in expenditure have been mainly effected under the headings of Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Public Works (approximately £Syr.4,500,000) which offset the major increases made in the grants for Defence and Education (£Syr.4,700,000).

Coinage

For some time past consideration has been given to the question of replacing the Syrian small denomination currency notes in circulation by metal coins. It is now learned that in December orders were placed with the Birmingham Mint and Messrs. I.C.I. Ltd. (Metal Division) for a total of 12 million coins, viz., 4 million each of 2½, 5 and 10 piastres denomination. The total value of the combined order is £19,673.

⁽¹⁾ Not printed.

Communications

Decrees issued by the Minister of Works and Communication provide for the establishment of direct wireless telegraphic communication between Syria and Hejaz (Decree No. 1251, dated 6th December) and Syria and Egypt (Decree No. 41, of 15th January). In each case the exchange centre in Syria will be Damascus, and the service operated from transmitters purchased from the British and American army disposals which are already in use for similar communication with other neighbouring Middle East countries.

A contract for the installation of automatic telephone exchanges and broadcasting stations was signed between the Standard Telephone Company and the Syrian authorities on 14th January, the total value of which is approximately £1,170,000. It embraces automatic telephone exchanges at Damascus (6,000 lines), Aleppo (6,000 lines), Homs (1,500 lines),

Latakia (1,000 lines), and Hama (1,000 lines), including the supply of 10,000 telephone instruments and other associated equipment. The broadcasting stations are to be erected at Sabboura and Saraqeb. The station at Sabboura, the site of the existing broadcasting station about 15 kilom. west of Damascus, will include a 50-kw. medium-wave transmitter and two 20-kw. short-wave transmitters, while the station at Saraqeb, situated about 50 kilom. south of Aleppo, will have a 20-kw. transmitter. Delivery is to start in twelve months, commencing with the equipment for the Damascus automatic telephone exchange, and it is planned to complete the total project within three to three and a half years.

A. HALSEY,
First Secretary (Commercial).

Damascus, 14th February, 1948.

E 9234/9234/89

No. 4

SYRIA: HEADS OF FOREIGN MISSIONS, 1948

Mr. Broadmead to Mr. Bevin. (Received 9th July)

(No. 85) Damascus,
Sir, 30th June, 1948.

I have the honour to transmit herewith a report on heads of missions accredited to Syria. It will be noted that only six reside in Damascus; nine are in Beirut and four in Cairo. Those who live in Beirut are seldom seen in Damascus; of the Cairenes I have only seen the Pole.

I am copying this despatch to His Majesty's representatives at Beirut and Cairo.

I have, &c.
P. M. BROADMEAD.

Enclosure in No. 4

Heads of Foreign Missions in Syria, 1948
Resident in Damascus

France
M. Jean Serres, minister (7th August, 1946).
With the exception of a few months spent in Kabul before coming to Damascus, M. Serres' career has been spent in the Mediterranean Basin and his vision is limited accordingly. He pays lip-service to Anglo-French co-operation in accordance with instructions, but I feel he is suspicious of us. Mme. Serres, when not feeling or looking sour, which is rare, can be

quite pleasant. The household is completed by Mme. Serres' daughter of uncertain age, who helps with cooking and cyphering and, I would say, probably runs the legation; she makes no attempt to hide her anti-German or pro-Russian sympathies.

Iraq
Abdul Karim Mahmud Tai, chargé d'affaires (17th February, 1948).

Mr. Tai came to Damascus from Aleppo, where he had been consul for a few months. He appears to be friendly and speaks good English. He is married to a woman who looks like a gorilla and who speaks no European language.

Italy
M. Luigi Cortese, minister (6th November, 1947).
M. Cortese is a career diplomatist who spent many years at Geneva with the League of Nations and later served in the Far East. He tells me that he has absolutely no work to do and is profoundly bored. Both he and his wife are friendly people and a slight ray of light in the gloom of the Damascus Diplomatic Corps.

Saudi Arabia
Abdul Aziz Ben Zeid, minister (26th June, 1944).
Although he nominally lives in Damascus, he spends most of the winter in Beirut and it was some time before I was able to exchange calls. Since then I have seldom seen him. He speaks no European language. According to the Diplomatic List, he has a wife, but I am not aware that anyone has ever seen her.

Turkey
M. Abdulahat Aksin, minister (26th June, 1946).
M. Aksin came to Damascus from Buenos Aires, where he had spent some seven years. Naturally, as Turkish representative, his position is not an easy one, but I cannot say he is an impressive figure and his conversation, in French, is extremely hard to follow. His wife is quite pleasant and seems to have benefited more from their sojourn in a foreign land than the minister has.

United States
Mr. Robert E. Memminger, chargé d'affaires (10th July, 1947).

More than one year ago Mr. Alling was appointed first American Minister to Syria. He was later appointed to Pakistan and Mr. J. H. Keely was appointed in his place as long ago as last October; he has, however, still not arrived. In the meantime the legation has been in charge of Mr. Memminger, who has not had very many years' service and is obviously wilting under the strain of American policy over the Palestine question.

Resident in Beirut

(Those marked with an asterisk have secretaries resident in Damascus)

Argentina
M. Alberto Vinas, minister (4th August, 1947).

Belgium
*Count Geoffrey d'Aspremont-Lynden, minister (6th January, 1947).

Brazil
Vacant.

Czechoslovakia
M. Karel Stanek, chargé d'affaires (13th October, 1947).

Egypt
*Awad Bahraoui Bey, minister (22nd October, 1947).

Persia
*M. Zein-el-Abdine Rahnama, minister (12th November, 1946).

Spain
M. Teodoro Ruiz de Cuevas, chargé d'affaires (3rd May, 1948).

Soviet Union
*M. Daniel Solod, minister (26th October, 1944).

Yugoslavia
M. Viktor Vidmar, chargé d'affaires (15th August, 1947).

Resident in Cairo

Greece
M. Georges Triantaphillidis, minister (24th June, 1947).

Poland
Dr. Zygmunt Waclaw Kuligowski, minister (15th April, 1947).

Sweden
M. Widar Bagge, minister (24th June, 1947).

Switzerland
Dr. D. Secrétan, minister (letters not yet presented).

E 7805/2603/89

No. 5

GROWTH OF THE NATIONAL PARTY IN SYRIA

Mr. Broadmead to Mr. Bevin. (Received 10th June)

(No. 74. Confidential) Damascus,
Sir, 5th June, 1948.

With reference to Damascus despatch No. 72 of 26th June, 1947, I have the honour to report on the growth of the new party known as the "National Party." It had become obvious prior to the 1947 elections that the main object of the National bloc, namely, the elimination of the French from Syria, had been achieved, and the Syrian President then decided to create a party which would support him in his intention to be re-elected for a second term of office. To this end he sent Nebih el Azmeh (Syrian Personalities, No. 29) on a tour of northern Syria to organise support for the presidential list of candidates in the July election. As was reported in paragraph 9 of Damascus despatch No. 86 of 28th July, 1947, a last-minute manoeuvre of Jamil Mardam resulted in the total

eclipse of President's list in Aleppo and in a number of the northern constituencies. Nevertheless, the present Chamber of 133 Deputies contains some forty members of the National Party.

2. In these circumstances it was even more important for the President to organise a solid bloc of Deputies who would be prepared to vote for the alteration of the Constitution in the President's favour. To this end Nebih el Azmeh was provided with funds by the President for the expansion of the National Party and he was elected chairman of the Central Committee. The party has been vigorously organised and now has branches in Damascus, Aleppo, Latakia, Hama, Homs and Jezirah. Amongst its members are to be found many of the old members of the National bloc and particularly those who are ready to hitch their wagons to Shukri Quwatli's star.

3. Since October 1946, when all political parties were suppressed, no parties are officially recognised by the Syrian Government. But the National Party has made no secret of its existence and the chairman has on more than one occasion given his views to the press on such matters as the Franco-Syrian Monetary Agreement, the Amendment of the Syrian Constitution and Palestine. In connexion with Palestine he has signed and sent a letter to the United Nations and to various Governments hostile to the Arab cause. The aims of the party, as stated in its programme, are somewhat vague and in general run on pan-Arab and nationalist lines; it declares, for instance, that Arabs, wherever they live, are of one nation of which Syria is a part and that the party will strive to liberate all parts of the Arab country and strengthen the legal, social, cultural, economic and political ties between them; conversely, that party will oppose any tendency inconsistent with the aspiration of the Arab nation and considers Zionism a hostile movement endangering Arab existence. With regard to internal policy the party will work for and effect the independence of Syria and will abide by the Constitution, *i.e.*, the Republican régime, and will press for the reorganisation of the machinery of Government and the improvement of agriculture, industry and the social services of the country.

4. Up to the present, with the exception of the press interviews referred to above, the party's sole activity has been to change

the Constitution in favour of the President and to ensure his re-election.

5. The only other party which can be said to exist is the Parliamentary Constitution Party, limited to some thirty Deputies, which, though it has not yet issued a programme, is known to have much the same object in foreign and external policy as the National Party and, in fact, to differ only in that it is not prepared to support blindly everything that the President desires.

6. The remaining sixty odd Deputies are, with few exceptions, uninterested in either the internal or external politics of the country. For the most part they represent the tribes or purely agricultural areas and confine their activities to voting for the Government in power so that they may more easily obtain their purely local requirements, tractors, lorries, a higher price for wheat or sheep, Government contracts and so on. Jamil Mardam's value to the Syrian President lies in the fact that he has for the past eighteen months been the only man with sufficient parliamentary astuteness to be able to maintain a Government in power with the necessary working majority in the Chamber of Deputies. It is doubtful whether any member of the National Party would yet be able to do so.

I am copying this despatch to His Majesty's representatives at Beirut, Bagdad and Amman and the British Middle East Office.

I have, &c.

P. M. BROADMEAD.

No. 8

E 9632/298/89

LEADING PERSONALITIES IN SYRIA, 1948

Mr. Broadmead to Mr. Bevin. (Received 16th July)

(No. 86)

Sir, *Damascus, 30th June, 1948.*

With reference to Mr. Eyres's despatch No. 27 of 27th December, 1946, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a revised report on the leading personalities in Syria. This has been prepared by Mr. Dundas.

I have, &c.

P. M. BROADMEAD.

Enclosure

Leading Personalities in Syria, 1948

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Abbas, Munir. | 46. Halabi, Fuad. |
| 2. Abouchar, Suleyman Sylvain. | 47. Hamzeh, Araf. |
| 3. Ahmed, Mokamet Suleiman al. | 48. Hariri, Mohamed Kheir. |
| 4. 'Aidi, Abdul Kerim. | 49. Hariri, Wahbi el. |
| 5. Ajlani, Munir. | 50. Hatem, Dr. Anwar. |
| 6. Akras, Michel. | 51. Hawash, Aziz. |
| 7. Alexandros III, Tahhan. | 52. Hayani, Toufiq. |
| 8. Antaki, Naim. | 53. Hiffel, Sheikh Abbud al. |
| 9. Aphram I, Mar Ignatius. | 54. Hindieh, Gregoire. |
| 10. Armanazi, Najib. | 55. Hiraki, Hikmat. |
| 11. Arslan, Amir Adel. | 56. Homs, Edmond. |
| 12. Assali, Sabri. | 57. Horani, Akram. |
| 13. Assioun, Fathalla. | 58. Hubbi, Yuhanna. |
| 14. Atassi, Adnan. | 59. Hunaidi, Mohamed al. |
| 15. Atassi, Feidi. | 60. Huraiki, Bishop Antoine. |
| 16. Atassi, Hashem al. | 61. Ibish, Nuri al. |
| 17. Atfen, Abdullah. | 62. Ibrahim Pasha, Khalil Bey. |
| 18. Atrash, Amir Hassan al. | 63. Inglizi, Issam. |
| 19. Atrash, Soltan Bin Hamud Pasha el. | 64. Ishaq, Said Bey. |
| 20. Ayes, Haj Mohamet el. | 65. Jabi, Dr. Rushdi. |
| 21. Ayoubi, Ali. | 66. Jabri, Ihsan Bey al. |
| 22. Azm, Khaled al. | 67. Jabir, Mejd ed Din. |
| 23. Azmeh, Adil al. | 68. Jebara, Hassan Bey. |
| 24. Azmeh, Nabih al. | 69. Jneid, Mohamed. |
| 25. Babil, Nassouh. | 70. Kabbara, Sami. |
| 26. Bagdash, Khaled. | 71. Kailani, Akram. |
| 27. Bakri, Fauzi el. | 72. Kailani, Saadi (Shami Pir). |
| 28. Bakri, Mazhar. | 73. Kayali, Abdurrahman. |
| 29. Barazi, Husni. | 74. Kecati, Rudolphe. |
| 30. Barazi, Muhsen. | 75. Kekhia, Rushdi. |
| 31. Barazi, Najib Agha. | 76. Khankan, Rifa'at, Lieut.-Colonel. |
| 32. Burudi, Fakhri. | 77. Khatib, Bahij Bey al. |
| 33. Bukhari, Nassouhi al. | 78. Khoja, Hamid. |
| 34. Daham el Hadi, Sheikh. | 79. Khouri, Fares al. |
| 35. Dahr, Haj Sami Sayem al. | 80. Khouri, Faiz al. |
| 36. Dandashi, Ali Abdul Karim. | 81. Kinj, Ali al. |
| 37. Faraj, Bishop Antoine. | 82. Kinj, Ibrahim. |
| 38. Faraj, Mohamed el Sheikh. | 83. Lian, Mikhael. |
| 39. Fatayah, Mohamed al. | 84. Maasarani, Abdul Hadi Ben Abdullah. |
| 40. Fa'ur, Fa'ur Amir. | 85. Maasarani, Haj Sulaiman. |
| 41. Ghazzi, Said al. | 86. Mahasin, Said. |
| 42. Haffar, Lutfi. | 87. Maloyan, Hrant, Colonel. |
| 43. Hajjo, Agha Hassan. | 88. Marashli, Haj Fatef al. |
| 44. Hakim, Hassan Bey al. | 89. Mardam, Haidar Bey. |
| 45. Hakem, Hikmet el. | 90. Mardam, Jamil. |
| | 91. Maizer ibn Abdul Muhsen al Jarba Sheikh. |
| | 92. Malki, Abdul Wahhab el. |
| | 93. Midani, Abdul Qader el. |
| | 94. Milqi, Raif. |
| | 95. Mirzo, Ghaleb. |
| | 96. Mohammed, Said Agha el. |
| | 97. Mudarres, Mohamed Khalil. |
| | 98. Mujhem ben Muhaid, Amir. |
| | 99. Murabet, Jawad el. |
| | 100. Murad, Leon. |
| | 101. Murhej, Farid. |
| | 102. Murshed, Sheikh Rakan. |
| | 103. Namy, Damad Ahmed. |
| | 104. Nizam ed Din, Abdul Baqi. |
| | 105. Quitami, Ogl. |
| | 106. Qudmani, Abdul Ghani. |
| | 107. Qudmani, Fuad. |
| | 108. Qudsi, Nazem. |
| | 109. Quwatli, Shukri. |
| | 110. Rayess, Munir al. |
| | 111. Rayess, Najim el. |

112. Ricaby, Haidar.
113. Rifai, Ahmed.
114. Sabah, Dr. Hosni.
115. Sahnouli, Jean.
116. Saleh, Sheikh Nawwaf As.
117. Sayegh, Maximos IV.
118. Sebai, Hani Ben Gehab.
119. Sebai, Sheikh Mustafa al.
120. Sha'alan, Amir Fawwaz.
121. Shamieh, Toufiq.
122. Sharabati, Ahmed.
123. Shayish, Abdul Karim, Emir.

1. Abbas, Munir

Born about 1905. Of good Alawite family. Brother of Shawkat Abbas, Mohafiz of Alawites. Well educated in France (law). Minister of Public Works and of Posts and Telegraphs in Hassan al Hakim Government (September 1941 to April 1942), again in Husni Barazi Government (April 1942 to January 1943) and again in Jamil Ulshi Government January 1943 and again in Jamil Ulshi Government 1943 and 1947. Very intelligent and has for some years actively intrigued against the Central Government.

2. Abouchar, Suleyman Sylvain

Born Damascus about 1890. Greek Orthodox. Received his secondary education as a civil engineer in Louvain, Belgium. Has had experience in Mexico. Chief engineer of the Public Works Department, South Syria, transferred August 1944 as Inspector of Public Works. Represented Syria on Communication Committee of Arab League in February 1947. Speaks French and English. Intelligent, capable, straight. Is interested in farming and in the glass and sugar industries. Hot-tempered and dislikes being contradicted. Co-operated fully with British army on their arrival in Syria.

3. Ahmed, Mohamet Suleiman al

Alawite. An Arab poet known as "Badawi el Jebel," is now a Nationalist in politics. He was at first a Separatist and secretary to Ali Kinj in the Department of the Interior in the Jebel Alawite, but, quarrelling with the French over their administration, became a Nationalist member of Syrian Parliament for Banias, 1937. Went to Iraq in 1939 as professor of Arabic. Violently anti-French and believed to have supported Rashid Ali Keilani against the British. Returned to Syria in 1941 and was elected Deputy for the Caza of Latakia 1943 and 1947, and Secretary of Chamber of Deputies.

4. 'Aidi, Abdul Kerim

Born 1903. Educated in Dasmascus, but while still a student was sentenced to five years' imprisonment following the Crane Commission incidents and fled to Transjordan, where he met King Ali, whom he accompanied to the Hedjaz. Returned to Damascus in 1927; principal of the Ulmiyeh College 1929-39. Fled to Bagdad to escape arrest by the French, but returned in 1941. Kaimakam of Douma 1943-45. Director of Police, Damascus, April 1945 to May 1946, during which period he was on very friendly terms with the officers of the British Military Security Mission and proved very co-operative. Mohafez of Dera' 1946-47. Appointed Mohafez of Hama December 1948. Was a leading member of the League of National Action and, consequently, works in close harmony with the President and the National Party. He is a close personal friend of the President.

5. Ajlani, Munir

Son of Darwish Ajlani. Born, Damascus 1910. Studied in France, where he graduated as doctor of

124. Shehabi, Amir Bahjat al.
125. Shehabi, Amir Mustafa.
126. Sherif, Ihsan.
127. Shretah, Abdul Qader.
128. Sidawi, Wadi'.
129. Stati, Mgr. Iyunis.
130. Sulh, Anf al.
131. Urfi, Sheikh Said.
132. Yaziji, Toufiq.
133. Yusef, Mohamet Said al.
134. Za'im, Colonel Husni el.
135. Zain ed Din, Farid.

law. Author of a book on Syrian Constitution. Elected Deputy 1936. At outset of Nationalist régime he, with Seif ed Din Ma'moun, Ahmad Samman and Mohamed Sarraj, organised the "Iron Shirts" (an organisation based on Nazi Brown Shirts) and was one of the commanders until it was taken over by Nizhat Mamluk 1937. Soon after, movement was suppressed by French following disorders in Aleppo and Latakia.

Although his age had been amended by Nationalists to enable him to become Deputy (minimum 30), he bitterly opposed Nationalists in Parliament. In 1938 he and Zeki el Khatib were arrested and tried for writing a manifesto attacking Nationalist Government, but were acquitted.

When Dr. Shahbandar returned to Syria, Ajlani supported him and remained one of his intimates until Shahbandar's murder in July 1940, when he gradually ceased his connexion with the party.

In September 1941 he was appointed head of Sheikh Taj ed Din's secretariat, and when on 17th April, 1942, Cabinet was reshuffled Sheikh Taj made him Minister of newly created Ministry of Youth and Propaganda in the Government of Husni Barazi. Was a member of Jamil Ulshi's Government (January 1943 to March 1943), occupying the same Ministry, the name of which was changed to Ministry of Social Affairs (January 1943). Married on 20th August, 1942, the daughter of Sheikh Taj. Appointed lecturer in Roman law at Damascus University, March 1943. Professor of Law College 1945. Deputy for Damascus 1947. Minister of Education in Jamil Mardam's second Government October 1947. Member of Syrian Delegation to Arab League Conference in Beirut October 1947.

Conceited and tactless individual, vacillating yet obstinate. Is considered a good speaker by Arabs.

6. Akras, Michel

Maronite Archbishop of Aleppo. Born 1877. Educated in the Maronite College at Beirut. Concealed British Consulate archives during the war of 1914-18. Probably the most sincere prelate in the Aleppo area, but neither his health nor influence is strong now. He hopes for the continuance of European influence in Syria.

7. Alexandros III, Tahhan

Born in Damascus in 1869, where he was educated in the Greek Orthodox School. His brilliance and his steadiness led to his being sent to the Ecclesiastical College in Constantinople. In 1894 he returned to Damascus and two years later went to the religious academy in Kiev. Studied for a few years in Moscow. In 1903 he was appointed Bishop of Adana and Tarsus, but was badly received by the population there and resigned in 1906. In 1908 he was appointed Bishop of Tripoli and remained there until 1930, when he was elected Patriarch of Damascus by the Damascus electors but not by other members of the electoral college, who elected Arsanios, Bishop of Latakia. A schism resulted and the three other patriarchs (Alexandria, Constantinople and Jerusalem) sent representatives to conduct an enquiry into the election. They finally gave

their opinion in favour of Alexandros. The schism, however, persisted until the death of Arsanios in 1932. Alexandros has been criticised for his weak handling of the Epiphanos revolt in 1935, which resulted in the formation of an independent church in Latakia in 1936. This independent community existed until 1939, when the French High Commissioner threatened to declare it illegal. Since that date Epiphanos and the Patriarch have been reconciled. The Italian attack on Greece in 1940 brought Alexandros into the open as an outspoken supporter of the Greek cause in spite of the presence in Syria of an Italian Armistice Commission and in spite of the pro-Axis leanings of the French Vichy authorities. As he supported the Greeks, so he supported the Allied cause under the same circumstances. The traditional Russian support enjoyed by the Orthodox Church in Syria having ceased in 1917, the Orthodox community under Alexandros has drawn nearer to the Moslem Syrian Government and, on the whole further away from the Latin Christian community which has enjoyed the protection of the French Mandatory. Alexandros maintains relations with the Anglican Church both in Jerusalem and in England. When the Government of the U.S.S.R. acknowledged the Russian Orthodox Church in 1941-42 he began a correspondence with the Patriarch Sergei, and attended the election ceremonies in Moscow of the Patriarch in January 1945. Does not interfere in internal politics, but is known to fear that present Nationalist régime may harm the interests of the Christian minorities and has recently been reported to have become increasingly susceptible to Russian blandishments. Pleasant and cultivated.

8. Antaki, Naim

Born Aleppo 1900. Educated in American University, Beirut. Greek Orthodox. A lawyer, he formerly worked with Maître Louis Zaidé and was at one time Dean of the Order of Barristers at Aleppo. Has visited India. Secretary to the Syrian delegation in Paris for the conclusion of the Franco-Syrian Treaty. On his return he became, in July 1937, Director for Foreign Affairs, but resigned in December 1937, being dissatisfied with the way in which he was ignored by his Moslem colleagues whenever important decisions were to be taken. Took no part in politics from fall of Nationalist Government (1939) until selected as Minister for Provisional Government of Ata Bey Ayoubi, in which he held Ministries for Foreign Affairs and Public Works (March 1943-August 1943). Elected Deputy for Damascus, whither he had officially transferred his domicile, in 1943, but for many months took no active part in politics as a result of temporary loss of eyesight through overwork. Minister of Finance, April 1945 to August, in Fares Khouri's second Government (q.v.); member of Syrian delegation to United Nations Conference in San Francisco, April 1945, Minister of Finance and Acting Minister of Public Works in Saadullah Jabri's Government (q.v.), September 1945, but resigned December 1945. Minister for Foreign Affairs in Jamil Mardam's First Government, December 1946 until April 1947. Is lawyer of Syrian Petroleum Company, Middle East Pipe Lines, Trans-Arabian Pipe Line and of Syrian Bank. Has been member of Syrian Delegation at several United Nations Conferences and at many Arab League meetings. Formerly an ardent Nationalist, his views are now considerably more moderate although he retains his great admiration and friendship for Jamil Mardam. Very well educated, a tremendous worker and straightforward and sincere. Well disposed towards British. Speaks English and French.

9. Aghram I, Mar Ignatius; Barsum

Syrian Orthodox (Jacobite) Patriarch of Antioch. Born 1884. Educated by the Dominicans at Mosul and received into the Roman Catholic Communion.

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Subsequently reverted to his original Church, and was ordained in it. Became Patriarch with residence at Homs 1932. His community extends over the Middle East and India (whence he draws considerable funds). Very aware of his own importance and that of his Church. Like most Levant churchmen, mingles politics with religion.

10. Armanazi, Najib

Born about 1900. From Hama. Docteur en Droit ("à titre d'étranger") of Paris. Was private secretary to President Abed, and so anathema to Taj ed Din, who persuaded de Martel to oblige Abed to get rid of him. Now 100 per cent Nationalist. Appointed private secretary to President Atassi in 1937. On the resignation of President Atassi (July 1939) remained unemployed until appointed Secretary-General to President Quwatli, August 1943. Is brother-in-law of Jamil Mardam Bey, with whom, however, he is not on good terms. Appointed Minister Plenipotentiary to Great Britain, Poland and Czechoslovakia, January 1945. Syrian representative on Preliminary Committee for United Nations Organisation and member of Syrian delegation to United Nations Organisation meeting in London, November 1945, also appointed Minister to Sweden September 1947. He is not generally considered to have made a success of his mission.

11. Arslan, Amir Adel

Born about 1890. A Druse from the Lebanon (brother of Shekib Arslan, q.v.). Was pro-Turk in the War of 1914-18 and held a Kaimakamship in the Lebanon. Member of the Party of Independence 1919-20. Took an active part in the rebellion of 1925-26 and was condemned to death by the French. Amnestied in 1937. Expelled from Egypt in 1931 after anti-Italian agitations. Lived for some years in Iraq. Accompanied Syrian Prime Minister to Paris in 1937 to discuss ratification of Franco-Syrian Treaty, and subsequently returned to Syria, where he received a warm welcome. Has several times visited the United Kingdom, where he has business interests and where he was connected with Arab centre. Figured on the Palestine Black List (1937 and 1939). Worked with von Hentig and Roser from beginning of year 1941 to arrival of Allies in Syria, June 1941, when he fled to Turkey, where he is believed to have maintained contact with Syria. Is stated to have tried to put Druses against Allies. In October 1941 became head of "Free Syrian Government" created by Vichy. Returned to Syria after the intervention of the President of the Republic in 1945 with the Allied Security authorities; appointed Minister Plenipotentiary to Brazil January 1946 but did not proceed. Minister of Education in Saadullah Jabri's third Government June 1946. Minister of Education in Jamil Mardam's first Government December 1946 to October 1947. Member of Syrian Delegation to London Palestine Conference in autumn of 1946 and to United Nations Palestine discussions September 1947. Deputy for Jaulan 1947.

Is a distinguished-looking and widely travelled person but retains many of the characteristics of his Druse ancestry—unreliability, cunning and outbursts of bad temper.

12. Assali, Sabri

Born Damascus 1901. Sunni Moslem. Took law degree in University of Damascus.

Being of Nationalist outlook, joined Nationalist Youth Movement and became its leader in 1940. Active in formation and control of Iron Shirts Movement until 1937, when it was disbanded. Joined up with Shukri Quwatli's Istiklal Party and became his principal lieutenant in 1940. Under Vichy régime was anti-Allied, and organised in May 1941 Committee for Defence of Iraq (i.e., pro-Rashid Ali). Arrested by Allies in February 1941 and interned

at Rashaya. Released March 1943, elected Deputy for Damascus that year and again in 1947. Was a leading member of the League of National Action, which exercised considerable influence in Damascus and on which the President of the Republic placed considerable reliance. He is now Secretary-General of the National Party.

Minister of Interior in Fares Khouri's second Government (*q.v.*) April to August 1945. Minister of Justice in Fares Khouri's third Government, August-September 1945. Minister of Education and Acting Minister of Education in Saadullah Jabri's second Government, September 1945 to April 1946. Minister of Interior and Minister of Health in Saadullah Jabri's third Government, April-December 1946. As Minister of Interior showed himself ready to take strong action to prevent disorders and to suppress anti-Government activity. He is unmarried, and drinks and gambles heavily.

13. Assioun, Fathalla

Born 1899. Educated at the Frères School and the French School of Law, Aleppo. A well-known Aleppo lawyer of the Armenian Catholic Community. A moderate member of the National *bloc* and a supporter of Saadullah Jabri. Deputy for Aleppo in 1936 and again in 1943. On the resignation of Naim Antaki (*q.v.*) from Saadullah Bey's second Government was appointed Minister of Public Works, January until April 1946. A somewhat colourless individual with a reputation for probity and high principles.

14. Atassi, Adnan

Born Homs about 1905. Sunni Moslem. Son of Hashem Atassi (*q.v.*). Lawyer. During Nationalist Government was appointed Syrian Vice-Consul and attached for instruction to French Consulate, Istanbul. Married Turkish woman. Elected Deputy for Homs 1943 and again 1947, and President of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Syrian Chamber. Minister Plenipotentiary to France and Belgium, January 1945 to March 1946. Minister of Justice and Public Works in Jamil Mardam's First Government, December 1946 to June 1947. Represented Syrian Chamber of Deputies at the International Parliamentary Conference at Geneva, September 1945. At one time suspected of pro-Axis activities and was known to be in frequent contact with the Grand Mufti during the latter's residence at Versailles. A prominent member of the Parliamentary Constitutional Party. Intelligent and well educated, and has now become one of the leading Deputies in opposition to Shukri Quwatli's régime. He would probably support a change to monarchy.

15. Atassi, Feidi

Born about 1905. Son of former Mufti of Homs and cousin of Hashem al Atassi (*q.v.*). Educated in France (law). Had no political career, but was Chief of Municipality of Homs. Became Minister of Education in the Hassam al Hakim Government on its formation in September 1941, but resigned early in March 1942 in pique. Chosen to be Minister of Justice, Education, Social Affairs in Provisional Government at Ata Bey Ayoubi (March 1943-August 1943). Weak character and very boastful, being over proud of his education. Returned to his job as Head of the Municipality, Homs, until 1946, when he resigned. Deputy for Homs, 1947.

16. Atassi, Hashem al

Born about 1865. Good landed family. Prime Minister and President of the Constituent Assembly under Feisal, and President of the Constituent Assembly of 1928. Went to Mecca to be one of the three mediators in conflict between Imam Y ahya and Ibn Saud. Succeeded Hanano as leader of the Syrian Nationalist *bloc* in January 1936. Led the Syrian delegation that went to Paris in March 1936 to negotiate a Franco-Syrian treaty after the dis-

turbances of January-March 1936. A Nationalist who tempers courage with discretion. With the Syrian delegation in Paris his moderating and soothing influence was of great assistance to the successful conclusion of the treaty negotiations. Elected President of the Syrian Republic 21st December, 1936. On his election as President he resigned the leadership of the Nationalist Party, which was taken over by Shukri Quwatli. As President showed the same dignified tact and restraining influence as he had done during the treaty negotiations. His influence over the Nationalist Party grew less, however, as the Nationalist Government took the bit more firmly between its teeth. Resigned with the fall of the Nationalist Government on 7th July, 1939, and retired to his property at Homs, where he had built himself a pleasant villa during his tenure of office. Had conversations with General Dentz about resuming office in March 1941 and with General Catroux in September 1941 and again in March 1943, but on each occasion without result. He has remained on his property ever since, not participating in 1943 elections nor standing for the presidency. He is regarded as a respectable old man of moderate opinions, but somewhat *passé*. A figure-head rather than a leader.

17. Atfeh, Abdullah

Born about 1897. Lieutenant Ottoman Military College 1916, taking part in 1914-18 war; served in Arab army during Feisal's régime 1918-21; joined Troupes Spéciales January 1921; went to Paris in an infantry brigade; stationed at Strasbourg for a year; promoted to rank of major, June 1933, and appointed Officer Commanding of 5th Battalion Troupes Spéciales, Latakia. Attended French Staff College 1936-38; served on the General Staff in Beirut and Damascus; promoted to rank of lieutenant-colonel June 1941. Seconded to Syrian Government as Director-General of National Defence 1941; Chief of Staff, Deir-*ez-Zor*, 1942; Officer Commanding of Coastal Defence 1942-43. Officer Commanding 5th Brigade, January 1944. Promoted to rank of full colonel and appointed Director-General of Syrian Gendarmerie, June to August 1945; appointed Chief of Staff of Syrian army, August 1945. Placed on pension list May 1948 after failure of Syrian Army in Palestine.

He possesses on paper high military qualifications, but is somewhat eccentric and very deal.

18. Atrash, Amir Hassan al

Born about 1908. Head of the House of Aeré, the leading house of the Atrash family. Was Mohafiz of Jebel Druse until he was appointed Minister of Defence in Husni Barazi's Government (April 1942 to January 1943), taking the place occupied by his uncle, Abdul Ghaffar Pasha, until the old man's death in March 1942. Was again Minister of Defence in Jamil Ulshi's Government (January 1943 to March 1943). Deputy for Soueida 1943 and president of Defence Committee of Syrian Chamber, but placed on reserve in December 1947. Re-appointed Mohafiz of Jebel Druse (April 1943) and resigned from the Chamber. The full integration of Jebel Druse in the Syrian Republic in 1945 was largely due to his influence. In May 1945 he sponsored the mutiny of the Groupement Druse against their French officers and *n.c.o.s.*, to whom he gave sanctuary in his house. He considers that the Syrian Government are not sufficiently appreciative of the "leading rôle" the Druse have played both in 1925 and 1945 against the French. Amir Hassan is a typical Druse. He is ill-educated, stubborn, ambitious and avaricious. Despite his pretence of being pro-British, he did nothing to help the Allies during the Syrian campaign; and nothing to hinder. He can, however, sometimes be "jollied" into favourable action. Has flirted with Nationalists and with the French, and now makes no secret of his close contact with King Abdullah.

19. Atrash, Soltan Bin Hamud Pasha el

Born about 1875. (Soltan is a name, not a title.) Family originally from Rashaya, migrated to Jebel Druse in 1860's and became paramount Druse family there. Soltan is the head of the Kraiye house, which is junior to the Aeré house, headed by Emir Hassan (*q.v.*). Under the Turks, Soltan adopted wary tactics and avoided a conflict. In 1925-26 took a leading part in the Druse revolt and became a centre round which the various insurgent leaders moved. When the revolt was crushed Soltan Pasha fled to Transjordan with his closest adviser, the Christian Oqla Qutami (*q.v.*). There he found sanctuary, although condemned to death in absence by French court-martial. In 1937 returned to the Jebel but took no active part in politics, leaving Emir Hassan to dominate the Jebel. He retired to Kraiye, content to live on his past glory, which remains considerable. During the campaign of 1941 took no part. In March 1942, after the death of Abdul Ghaffar Pasha el Atrash, at that time Minister of National Defence, was offered the Ministry of Defence, but refused it. Soltan Pasha and Oqla Qutami were awarded pensions for life by the Syrian Government as patriots and heroes of 1925-26 revolt. Ill-educated, of small intelligence and with a reputation for meanness, he is crafty, and managed to inspire in the insurgents of 1925 confidence in his leadership. He remains the most important Druse. Is inclined to be pro-British and was anti-French. He feels, however, that the British let him down, as they told him not to intrigue against the Fighting French (and he abstained from doing so), but allowed the French to intrigue against him, undermining his influence in the Jebel Druse.

During the past three years he has on several occasions openly showed his dissatisfaction with the Damascus Government on the grounds that insufficient deference is paid to him and his past record.

20. Ayesh, Haj Mohamed el

Born about 1895. Sunni Moslem. Prominent landowner and merchant of Deir *ez Zor*. No political career and was formerly well-disposed towards the French. Good reputation in his district for honesty. Became Minister of Nation Economy in Hassan al Hakim's Government (September 1941 to April 1942), and again in Husni Barazi's Government (April 1942 to January 1943); again in Jamil Ulshi's Government (January 1943 to March 1943), when he showed goodwill in negotiations concerning the British-Syrian Petroleum Company. Elected Deputy for Deir *ez Zor* 1943, and in 1947 and Vice-President of Chamber. Has been acting-Speaker for past year, in the absence of Fares el Khoury and consistently supported Shukri Quwatli's manoeuvres for re-election as President.

An amiable landowner with some shrewdness but not much brain.

21. Ayoubi, Ali

Born 1920. Son of Ata Ayoubi, educated at French schools and A.U.B. Head of Rationing Department, August 1941-August 1943. Secretary to Director-General of Ravitaillement, August 1943 to December 1944, during which period he was suspected of racketeering pretty successfully. Appointed head of Syrian Security Service, July 1943, and, about the same time, married much against the wishes of his family a Polish refugee girl who had come to Syria as children's nurse in a French family. He rather surprisingly took his new appointment with great seriousness and showed himself genuinely desirous of raising the standard of the Department. His marriage has proved a success and seems to have steadied him. He co-operated closely with British military authorities until their evacuation in April 1946. Early in 1946 left Government service and went into a business partnership with his brother whose main interests

lie in Paris. He has also started the newspaper *Faiha*, which is better served with foreign news than other local newspapers. Does not belong to any political party and has taken no part in politics.

22. Azm, Khaled al

Born about 1900. Son of Mohamed Pasha al Azm. Did not at first take an active part in politics, except an occasional intervention in agricultural matters. Member of the Municipal Council. Managing director of the National Cement Factory. Appointed Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister of Justice in the Bukhari Cabinet, March to May 1939.

Under the influence of the Italian Disarmament Commission, was appointed by Vichy French (General Dentz) on 2nd April, 1941, as "Chef d'État" and Minister of Interior. His régime lasted until September 1941, when it was replaced by "Independent" Syrian Government with Shaikh Taj ed Din as President. During Syrian campaign he collaborated closely with Vichy French to preserve order in Damascus. During whole period of office he showed himself to be under the influence of the Nationalists—especially of Shukri Quwatli. Deputy for Damascus 1943 and Minister of Finance in Saadullah Jabri's Government (August 1943-October 1944). Minister of Finance and Ravitaillement in Fares Khouri's first Government October 1944 to April 1945. Minister of Finance and Defence in Fares Khouri's third Government August to September 1945. Minister of National Economy and Justice in Saadullah Jabri's third Government, April 1946. Was acting Prime Minister on several occasions and resigned in December 1946. Appointed Minister to France, Belgium and Switzerland, May 1947. Syrian representative on Franco-Levant States financial negotiations December to February 1946-47.

A rich landowner, very pompous and overbearing. A bit of a bully, but like all bullies, if stood up to, caves in. He is intelligent and well-educated and more widely read and has wider interests than most of his compatriots. Has now ambitions to become President of the Republic, but might be seriously handicapped in this by his present wife, a coarse merry woman of no family whom he keeps heavily veiled mainly because he is afraid lest she make some serious social gaffe. Suspected at one time of pro-German sympathies, but probably incorrectly; he has recently shown himself ready to co-operate with the British.

23. Azmeh, Adil al

Born about 1882. A diplomé of the Turkish School of Law. Whilst a political refugee in Transjordan he formed with his brother, Nabih al Azmeh (*q.v.*), the "Istiqlal Party," whose first objective was the expulsion of the French from Syria. During the 1925-26 revolt in Syria he collected, as treasurer of his party, large sums of money from Palestine, Transjordan and other countries. After keeping more than half himself, he provided the rebels in Syria with money and arms on a considerable scale. His flagrant abuse of British political asylum earned him a contumacious condemnation by French court-martial. He was included in the general amnesty of 1937. On his return he was acclaimed as a great patriot and given high office in the Ministry of the Interior by Nationalists in return for forming "Istiklal Party." Back in Syria he used his influence to repay the consideration he had received from the British authorities in Transjordan and Palestine by facilitating the supply of arms and ammunition to the rebels in Palestine during the disturbances of 1936 and in 1937 in going a step further in employing the Syrian Government machinery, from his key position in the Ministry of the Interior, to assist the recruitment of bandits in Syria for thuggery in Palestine. On the fall of the Nationalist Government in the spring of 1939 he proceeded on

leave to Iraq, where he built a cinema with his ill-gotten gains. In his absence (April 1940) he was condemned to twenty years' imprisonment for conspiring to overthrow the Council of Directors (July 1939). In collaboration with Haj Amin Hussaini is believed to have had a part in the Iraq rising (May 1941) and fled to Turkey, from where he returned clandestinely early in 1946. Mohafez of Alaouite Mohafazat June 1946 to January 1948, when he was transferred as Mohafez to Aleppo. A leading member of the National Party. An unscrupulous political adventurer.

24. Azmeb, Nabih al

Born about 1888. Brother of Adil al Azmeb (q.v.). Graduated from Turkish Military Academy in 1900. His advance in Turkish army was slow, as he was only a lieutenant when the war broke out in 1914. Was taken prisoner by British forces in 1916, but obtained his release to join the Amir Faisal's followers, where, like the Duke of Plaza Toro, he led from the rear. When Faisal was placed in charge of the "Occupied Enemy Territory East" he was made Chief of Police, Aleppo, but fled Syria on the French occupation in 1920. He was made welcome by the Emir Abdullah as a political refugee. He and his brother formed the "Istiqlal Party" in Transjordan. This led to his banishment, and he went to the Hedjaz, then to Egypt and so to Palestine, where he continued to foment trouble in Syria. He was one of the first of the Syrians amnestied in the general amnesty of 1937 to return to Damascus. In August and September 1937, under the direction of the Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin al Hussaini, and in concert with the Palestinian, Muin al Madi, he organised the anti-British pan-Arab Congress of Bludan. In an astonishingly short time he considerably enriched himself from the subscriptions obtained by the "Palestine Defence Committee," of which he was prominent member. In December 1938 used his influence to try to create trouble for the French, and was implicated in a plot against the "security of State," for which he was sentenced to twenty years' imprisonment and twenty years' banishment. Amnestied November 1940 at instigation of Italian Armistice Commission. Renewed his interest in politics (especially with Shukri Quwatli) and in May 1941 became member of a committee to send recruits and money to Iraq, against British. Fled to Turkey during Syrian campaign from where he returned clandestinely early in 1946 claiming President Quwatli's protection. He immediately made his house a centre for Palestinian politics and began an attempt to rejuvenate the "Istiqlal Party" of which the President of the Republic was a leading member. He was twice proposed for Cabinet appointments but after representations by His Majesty's Legation the suggestions were dropped. In April 1946 was appointed Minister of Defence in Saadullah Jabri's third Government when His Majesty's Minister was again consulted but raised no objection. Resigned June 1946 after a series of disagreements with his colleagues. Mohafez of Damascus town October 1946 to January 1947. Chairman of National Party December 1947 and now pretends to have altered his anti-British views.

A thoroughly contemptible rascal, who has betrayed his friends one after another.

25. Babil, Nassouh

Born Damascus about 1905, of obscure parentage. Arrested with Ajlani (q.v.) in 1938 for his support of Shahbandar against Mardam. Remained supporter of Dr. Shahbandar until latter was assassinated in July 1940, when he and Fuad Qodmani became leaders of Shahbandar Party. He and his party failed in 1943 elections and the party disintegrated. He is proprietor of the important Damascus newspaper *El Ayam* and President of the Press Syndicate. Came under suspicion of the Syrian Government of being in touch with the French regarding

the setting up of a quisling Government during the bombardment of Damascus in May 1945.

A clever individual of no principle.

26. Bagdash, Khaled

Born about 1910 in Damascus, of Kurdish origin of a family named Kutrash, Sunni Moslem. Educated in Damascus, where he studied philosophy. Became secretary of Communist Party in Damascus, 1928. The Communist Party was persecuted by the French and in 1934, following the distribution of Communist leaflets, was suppressed, Bagdash being condemned, to several years' imprisonment. He escaped to Russia, where he attended the Oriental School of Propaganda. He now claims that, while in Russia, he met Stalin. In 1936 went to Paris and obtained a special amnesty through the Syrian delegation which was negotiating the Franco-Syrian Treaty. Returned to Syria in January 1937 and resumed leadership of the Communist Party. Again went into hiding in Damascus at the outbreak of war when Communist Party was suppressed, remaining there until Germany attacked Russia (June 1941). After attempts to reach an understanding with Shukri Quwatli (q.v.) by which he should be included on the latter's electoral list in 1943, Bagdash stood as an independent candidate and failed. He failed also in the 1947 elections. For the last five years he has devoted his energies to organising the activities of the Communist Party, and is known to be in constant touch with members of the Soviet Legation. Stated to be owner of Communist paper *Saut ash Shaab*, of Beirut. Popular among the working classes and a good speaker. Said to receive substantial subsidies from Russia. Speaks Arabic, Kurdish, Russian, French. Ambitious, and prepared to make trouble.

27. Bakri, Fauzi el

Born Damascus about 1880. Sunni Moslem. Eldest son of late Ata Bey el Bakri. Landed family claiming descent from second Caliph. There is also a closely-related branch of the family in Egypt. Has brothers Nassib, Sami, Beshir, Mazhar (q.v.) and Khair ud Din and sons Assad and Baha ed Din.

Fauzi was president of the Arab Club, Damascus, in Ottoman days and was condemned to death (*in absentia*) by Turkish court-martial for desertion in 1916. In 1917 joined the Arab revolt in the Hojaz, but does not seem to have played a prominent part. After Faisal's arrival in Damascus Fauzi became an official there. Took a leading part in the revolt of 1925 and was condemned to death. Amnestied 1928 at request of Shaikh Taj ed Din. Failed at 1932 elections and has not since been politically active.

The Bakris, having lost most of their wealth, have tried to retain their influence by placing one member of the family in each political camp (Fauzi in 1945 took a leading part in monarchist activities in Syria) but this policy has not served them well, as it has raised suspicions on all sides.

Left for Egypt for duration of war (January 1943) in order "to avoid complications for himself and Allies."

Is a stupid man and it seems unlikely that he will ever figure largely in politics again, unless a monarchist régime comes into being.

28. Bakri, Mazhar

Sunni Moslem, born about 1900; brother of Fauzi Bakri. At the age of 14 fled from Damascus to join with his brothers the Arab revolt against the Turks. Studied agriculture in France 1919-24 and travelled extensively in Europe. In 1925 was condemned to death by the French for his part in the revolution but was later pardoned and with his brothers led the Mujahidanes Party. In 1932-36 was Director-General of a section of the Ministry of Finance, 1937

Director-General of Police and December 1944 was appointed Mohafiz of Damascus. Appointed Minister to Brazil in March 1947, but has been very ill for the last six months and has been unable to carry out his duties.

He has consistently worked for Syrian independence, but at present takes no active part in politics.

Is a popular and hard-working man and well-disposed towards the British. An agreeable and cultivated person.

29. Barazi, Husni

Born about 1882. Son of Suleiman Agha Barazi, a rich landed Kurdish family of Hama. Minister of the Interior under Damad, 1926. Deported on suspicion of assisting rebels in July 1926. Member of Constituent Assembly, 1928. Opposed by Nationalists in elections of 1932 and was not elected. He was, however, appointed Minister of Education in Taj ed Din's Government in March 1934, and resigned with Shaikh Taj in February 1936. Appointed Mohafiz of Alexandretta in January 1937, he sought to prove his attachment to his new Nationalist masters by intriguing with the Arab parties in the Sanjak against the Turks and the Mandatory, but was ejected in November 1937. Appointed Mohafiz of Damascus in March 1942. On fall of Hassan el Hakim Government (April 1942) was appointed by Shaikh Taj ed Din President of the Council of Ministers and Minister of the Interior. Succeeded Faiz Khouri as President of the Commission Supérieure of the Wheat Office, in which capacity he promised to secure large quantities of wheat, but did not succeed. Quarrelled with Shaikh Taj ed Din, posing as Syrian patriot, thinking he had the support of his colleagues. Matters came to a head in January 1943, when all his colleagues resigned and he was obliged to retire.

A man of some strength of character, but devoid of morals. Intriguer, and accused in the past of trafficking in hashish. Until he assumed office was heavily in debt. Before the visit to Syria of the Anglo-American Commission of Enquiry on Palestine in 1946 he volunteered to His Majesty's Consul, Damascus, to testify before the commission in favour of the Jews.

30. Barazi, Muhsen

Born about 1900. A Kurd of Hama. Educated in France. Professor at School of Law and later (1941) Dean. Appointed Minister of Education in Khalid al Azm Government (April to September 1941). Appointed member of Higher Committee for the Administration of the Funds of Common Interest, January 1944, and Secretary-General to the Presidency, February 1945. Head of various delegations to Arab League. Minister of Interior and Health in Mardam's second Government, October 1947. Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs on various occasions.

Although he is well educated and takes an intelligent interest in world affairs he has shown himself to be very narrow-minded over the Palestine question.

31. Barazi, Najib Agha

Born, Hama, about 1885. Wealthy landowner and head of Barazi family, who are of Kurdish origin. Leader of Nationalist *bloc* in Hama and Deputy in 1936 and again in 1943. Vice-President of Syrian Chamber of Deputies 1944-45. Most influential man in Hama, but unpopular. Strong character and very ambitious. Cunning, polished, but not well educated. Opponent of Husni Barazi (q.v.).

32. Barudi, Fakhri

Born, Damascus, 1893. Aide-de-camp to King Feisal in Damascus. First became prominent in revolt of 1925, in which he took an active part. Elected Nationalist Deputy in 1932 and again in

1936. In 1936 he was Inspector-General of Iron Shirts, a Nazi-inspired youth formation. Exiled for a short period by French for his share in 1936 troubles. Fled to Transjordan in 1939 after discovery of "plot against security of State" and kept a low coffee-house in Amman until he returned to Damascus in May 1941 after formation of Khalid el Azm Government. Elected Deputy at a by-election, in Damascus (October 1943). Deputy for Douma 1947 and "Controller" of the Chamber.

Was bitterly anti-French. Poses as an ardent Nationalist, but is a bit of a buffoon and a farceur; consequently nobody really takes him seriously. As head of the National Arab Bureau in 1938-39 actively aided Palestine rebels in propaganda sphere. A noted Arab orator in low-style Arabic, and a heavy drinker. Commonly accused of unnatural vice.

33. Bukhari, Nassouhi al

Born about 1884. Ex-Turkish officer. Educated in Constantinople. During 1914-18 war was brigade commander in Turkish army. Captured by Russians on Caucasian front. Escaped from prisoners-of-war camp in Siberia through China. Returned to Turkey via United States and Greece and given command of Turkish division on Palestine front. Went over to British when they occupied Damascus in October 1918. In 1925 appointed Minister of Agriculture in the Damad's Government. In 1927 took office as Minister of Education. Formed neutral Government with himself as Prime Minister in March 1939, but was dismissed by French in May 1939 as a preliminary to the appointment of the Council of Directors (July 1939). Deputy for Damascus 1943 and appointed Minister of Education and Defence in Saadullah Jabri's Government (August 1943-October 1944). Made his acceptance of Ministry of Defence conditional on the taking over of Syrian troops from the French. A man of principle and well respected.

34. Daham el Hadi, Sheikh

Born 1895. Bedouin chief and head of the Shammar Khrossa. Disputes the leadership of all the Shammar of Syria with his cousin, Meizar Abdul Muhsen, who actually heads the Shammar confederation. Also claims hereditary leadership of the Iraqi Shammar, from which he was evicted by the British. He is therefore bitterly jealous of Sheikh Sfook and continually contrives to undermine his position. Appointed Deputy of the Jezirah tribes in 1936. Exiled in 1942 for obstructing road constructions and wheat purchase. In spite of his being in exile, was elected Deputy in 1943 for Jezirah tribes and in 1947; returned to Syria 1944.

A proud and truculent sheikh, ignorant of his limitations and of world conditions.

35. Dahr, Haj Sami Sayem al

Born 1896. Wealthy industrialist and head of a weaving business. President of the Aleppo Chamber of Industry. Contributed largely to the Nationalist Party funds and was treasurer of the funds collected for Palestine, but became discontented with the policy of the Syrian Nationalist Government and resigned from the Nationalist *bloc* in March 1939. Elected Deputy 1943. Presented the cost of a Spitfire to Royal Air Force (March 1944).

36. Dandashi, Ali Abdul Karim

Born 1905 at Tel Kalakh. Member of the Danatch clan. A Sunni Moslem. Studied at the Islamic College in Beirut till 1928. Joined the scout movement in 1923 and has remained associated with it. In 1937 he took a group of Syrian scouts to the jamboree in Holland, travelling by way of the Balkans, Austria and Germany, returning through France and Italy. On this occasion he stayed for some time in Berlin and Potsdam, where he associated with Syrians in Germany, notably one of the Dalati brothers, who are associated with him in

the scout movement. From 1937 has devoted most of his time to scouting and was elected Chief Scout in November 1941. Is associated with the League of National Action, which was founded by his cousin and of which his colleague in the scout movement, Dr. Rushti Jabi (q.v.), is leading member. His arrest was ordered by the French in February 1942, but the order was cancelled at the end of March, and, shortly after, he paraded at the head of the scouts at the review of the Syrian gendarmerie.

Dandashi played an important part in the dispute between the scout movement and the Ministry of Youth and Propaganda under Munir Ajlani (q.v.), opposing Government control of the scout movement. After the Allied occupation showed himself willing to co-operate and took part with his scouts in passive defence exercises and now holds a leading position in the Fatuwwa (Youth Movement). Energetic and a disciplinarian.

37. Faraj, Bishop Antoine

Greek Catholic. Born in Damascus in 1885. Appointed patriarchal representative in Egypt in 1922 and in Damascus in 1928. Intelligent intriguer. Rules his flock with a despotic rod. As a Latin, his sentiments have inclined towards Italy, but after the Allied occupation in 1941 he concealed his pro-Italian propensities. When the religious schools were all closed following the events of May 1945 he arranged to accept responsibility for the *Sœurs de Besançon* (Greek Catholic) school and obtained permission for it to re-open. His influence has dwindled since the arrival of His Beatitude the Patriarch Maximos Sayegh (q.v.). An arch scrounger.

38. Faraj Mohamed el Sheikh

Born about 1895. Leader of the Wulda semi-sedentary tribe on the Euphrates, centring on Raqqa. Is on bad terms with Mujhem ibn Muheid (q.v.) of the Fedaan. Has considerable influence on Abu Shaaban Confederacy (semi-sedentaries). Banished January 1943 for obstruction to road making and to Allied wheat plan. Allowed to return in January 1945.

Intelligent but inclined to hypocrisy and takes hasty decisions.

39. Fatayah, Mohamed al

Born Deir ez Zor, about 1880. Sunni Moslem. Deputy in Istanbul in days of Ottoman Empire. Ex-President of the Municipality of Deir ez Zor. Headed the movement in Deir ez Zor in May 1941 to help Rashid Ali in his revolt by touring the country and trying to send recruits to join the Iraqi army. Deputy for Deir ez Zor 1936 and again in 1947. A former supporter of the Nationalist bloc and was on bad terms with the French, but now leads opposition to the bloc in the Deir ez Zor district.

40. Fa'ur, Fa'ur Amir

Born about 1900. Chief of the El Fadl Bedouin (sedentary) near Lake Hula. The lands of his tribe are astride the Syria-Palestine frontier. Sells his lands in Palestine to Jews. Elected Deputy for Kuneitra, December 1936. Strongly suspected of being engaged in smuggling arms and men to Palestine during the disturbances of 1937 to 1939. Was useful to British during and before Syrian campaign (June 1941). Went on pilgrimage to Mecca, winter, 1941-42, and, on return, spread pro-Allied propaganda at instance of Ibn Saud. In May 1942 toured Syria with Jamil Shamat, securing the signatures of ex-Deputies to a declaration in favour of the President of the Republic, Sheikh Taj ed Din. Deputy for Kuneitra 1943 and again in 1947. Has since joined the supporters of a monarchist régime for Syria under King Abdullah and maintains close contact with Amman. Visited America at the time of the United Nations Conference in San Francisco and spent a month in London on his way back. Took part in various minor skirmishes with Jewish

settlements in the Hula area during the early part of 1948.

A weak and spendthrift individual who has not maintained the renown of his family established by his father. Always playing at politics but with no conviction. Has the ambition to become a Minister. An agreeable but ineffective personality.

41. Ghazzi, Said al

Born about 1895. Took law degree in Damascus in 1921. Deputy to the Constituent Assembly 1928, but lost his popularity with the Nationalists by supporting Sheikh Taj ed Din. Pressed for Nationalist participation in 1932 elections. When negotiations with High Commissioner's delegate came to a deadlock (Ihsan Sherif insisting on standing), Said al Ghazzi withdrew his own candidature. Reputation enhanced by not being a party to the subsequent unsuccessful deals with M. Ponsot. Withdrew a second time in favour of Afif el Solh in July by-elections. Included in Ata Bey al Ayoubi's Cabinet as Minister of Justice in March 1936. Refused the post of Mohafiz of Latakia in January 1937. Appointed Director-General of the Ministry of National Economy 1938 and Director-General of Posts and Telegraphs in 1938, but dismissed in 1939. Included on Shukri Quwatli's list for 1943 election, he polled nearly as many votes as Quwatli himself. Re-elected Deputy 1947. In fact, it is almost certain that he polled more votes but the matter was "arranged." Minister of Justice and Ravitaillement in Fares Khouri's second Government, April to August 1945. Minister of Finance in Jamil Mardam's first Government, December 1946 to October 1947, and was on several occasions acting Prime Minister. Minister of National Economy in Mardam's second Government, October 1947. Good-natured, intelligent, comfortably off. Too colourless to be either useful or dangerous. Of moderate Nationalist tendencies, but dissatisfied with treatment received from that party.

42. Haffar, Lutfi

Born Damascus 1888 of a family of well-established merchants. Minister of Public Works under the Damad, 1926, and deported for Nationalist sympathies some months later. Member of the Constituent Assembly, 1928. Accepted post as administrator of Ain Fijeh waterworks, 1931. Deputy in 1932 and again in 1936 when he was elected vice-president of the Chamber of Deputies. Minister of Finance in the second Jamil Mardam Cabinet (July 1937 to February 1939). Prime Minister, 23rd February to 14th March, 1939. Implicated in the murder of Dr. Shabandar in July 1940, and fled to Bagdad. Returned to Syria after the charge against him had been dropped and the Government of Directors replaced by the moderate Nationalist Government of Khaled Bey el Azm (q.v.) in April 1941. Deputy for Damascus 1943 and again in 1947 and Minister of Interior in Saadullah Jabri's Government (August 1943-October 1944), but resented the latter's interference in his Department. Minister of Interior in Fares Khouri's third Government, August-September 1945. Minister of Interior in Saadullah Jabri's second Government, September 1945 to April 1946. Is interested in the newspaper *Al Inshaa*, which is nominally owned and directed by his cousin, Wajih el Haffar.

Not an extreme Nationalist, but has a lengthy record of political activity in connexion with Palestine—assisted Nebih el Azmi to organise the Arab Conference at Bludan in 1935 and is now chairman of the Syrian Committee for the Defence of Palestine. Not a strong personality though he was an important member of the Nationalist bloc and is now president of Damascus branch of National Party. A good second fiddler. Has lately been suffering from heart trouble.

43. Hajjo Agha Hassan

Born about 1898 near Mardine, Turkey. Head of Haverkan tribe of Kurds which moved into Syria about 1922. No specific education, but reads and writes Kurdish, Arabic and Turkish. With his late father took prominent part in Separatist Movement in the Jezirah. Resides at Hassetché. Was pro-Ally and co-operative during the war; elected Deputy for Kamishli 1943 and in 1947, but does not enjoy the confidence of the National Party owing to his former connexion with the French.

44. Hakim, Hassan Bey al

Born Damascus about 1886. Was an Inspector of Finance and later Director of Posts and Telegraphs in Faisal's Syrian Government of 1918-20. He was held responsible for delay in sending off Faisal's reply to General Gouraud's ultimatum in July 1920. (It was the absence of a reply that provided the excuse for General Gouraud to order French troops to advance on Damascus.) Exiled by the French but had fled to Egypt and later went to Iraq. Then he obtained an appointment as manager of the Arab Bank's Jaffa branch. Amnestied in 1937, he returned to Damascus and, as a loyal Nationalist, was appointed Director-General of Wakf. Minister of Education in Bukhari Cabinet, March to May 1939. Later became Director of Government Agricultural Bank. In September 1941 became President of Council and Minister of Finance in "Independent" Syria under the presidency of Sheikh Taj ed Din, as proclaimed by French. Quarrelled with President over latter's financial requests and with French over non-granting of various concessions of form to independence. Because of his rather stubborn and limited capacity was on bad terms with his colleagues, whom he was unable to pull together. Was undoubtedly pro-British, but was very indiscreet in falling under the influence of unworthy counsellors. He gave his enemies a chance to attack him because he openly proclaimed himself as opposed to the feudal landlords and because, although materially honest, he provoked laws to benefit himself in small ways. In April 1942 he was forced to resign in rather unpleasant manner, after defying the President, and reverted to former employment as Director of the National (Syrian) Agricultural Bank until July 1944, when he retired. Since then he has criticised the actions of the President of the Republic and the Government in letters and memoranda and has been outspokenly in favour of a Hashimite monarchy in Syria. Applied to visit London at the same time as the Emir Abdullah early in 1946, but was not granted a visa as his visit did not come under any category admissible at the time and it was not considered desirable to make any exception. Failed in 1947 elections.

45. Hakem, Hikmet el

Born 1890. Obtained M.D. at Istanbul College, served in the Turkish army during the First World War and settled in Idlib, where he practised. Deputy for Idlib 1926, 1936, 1943 and 1947. Minister of Public Works in Fares Khouri's second Government, April to August 1945, and again in Khouri's third Government, August to September 1945. Minister of National Economy in Jamil Mardam's first Government, December 1946 to October 1947, and Director-General of Mira. Elected second Vice-President of the Chamber of Deputies, October 1947. Used to be a member of the National bloc, but has not joined the National Party. He is not very impressive and has usually held office because he has few enemies. He is respected for his honesty and succeeded in making a number of reforms to clean up the Ministries of which he was in charge.

46. Halabi, Fuad

Born Damascus about 1905. Sunni Moslem. Married to an Atassi of Homs; formerly civil judge 37894

in Damascus and Homs. Appointed Acting Mohafiz of Homs 1942, confirmed in October and maintained in office by Saadullah Jabri's Government. Reputed honest as judge, and showed himself an astute and capable administrator. After his definite appointment as Mohafiz, however, he displayed political ambitions and showed himself reluctant to take a strong line when notables were concerned. Appointed early in 1946 as Administrative Inspector at Ministry of Interior. From December 1946 Director of Tribal Affairs.

47. Hamzeh, Araf

Born about 1903. Educated in Damascus. Studied law in the Damascus School of Law. Member of the Court of Appeal, having been appointed to this post in year 1936. Head of the Damascus Municipality in April 1942 until early 1945, when he was appointed Government representative on the Council of State. From June 1947 Secretary-General of Prime Minister's office (he is a brother-in-law of Jamil Mardam). Organised Damascus Spitfire Fund. Member of a well-known Damascus family claiming descent from the Prophet Mohamed. Given King's Medal for Service in the Cause of Freedom in 1947. Popular, pleasant, well-mannered and well educated, but rather weak.

48. Hariri, Mohamed Kheir

Born about 1900. The most influential sheikh in the Hauran. Considered a large landowner. After the entry of the Allies into Syria he was one of the principal agitators for the co-ordination of the Hauran with Transjordan. During the summer of 1942 he was a leading figure in the move for a Haurani Mohafiz. His name headed the telegram of protestation sent to General Collet on 20th August, 1942, complaining of Husni Barazi's high-handed method for the collection of wheat. This telegram demanded Barazi's resignation under threat of non-co-operation with the O.C.P. Frequently travels to Damascus, where he has dealings with political personages. Deputy for Ezraa, Hauran, 1943, and again in 1947.

Literate, but not educated. Politically conscious, ambitious and willing to run with the hares.

49. Hariri, Wahbi el

Born in Aleppo in 1907, received a secondary school education. Until 1939 was a small contractor and businessman in Aleppo, with connexions in Turkey. During the war he very rapidly increased his fortune contracting for the French and British armies, and building what is now the largest textile factory in Syria. Gave the price of a Spitfire to the British in 1942. Elected Deputy in 1943 on Saadullah Jabri's list and in 1947 on the list of the Parliamentary Popular Party. Appointed Minister of Finance in Jamil Mardam's Government in October 1947, is on good terms with Jamil. He is a clever businessman with few scruples, but has no knowledge of Government finance or of currency matters. He drinks heavily, and is disposed to talk frankly with the British with whom he believes his commercial interests lie.

50. Hatem, Dr. Anwar

Born 1910. An Alepine Christian educated in France, graduate of law from Paris University. Teacher of French Literature at the Tajhiz School, Damascus, 1933-36. Secretary to Prime Minister 1937-39. Assistant Chief of Diwan at Prime Minister's Office 1939-42. Director of Propaganda and Social Affairs April 1942-April 1943. Chief of Service in Prime Minister's Office April 1943-May 1945. Director of Prime Minister's Office May 1945. Appointed Second Counsellor at Ministry for Foreign Affairs March 1946 in addition to his other post. August 1947 sent on mission to London and was guest of British Council for a month. Intelligent

and has accurate idea of the inefficiency of the Syrian Government. A supporter of Jamil Mardam and has frequently shown himself willing to provide information to His Majesty's Legation, but is not entirely trustworthy and inclined to drink over-much.

51. Hawash, Aziz

Alawite. Born about 1885. Chief of the Matawira tribe living at Safita. His family fortunes, never great, have diminished to such an extent that he has to rely on his tribe (which is not rich) for financial support. Commissaire of Police in Beirut under Turkish régime. Resentment of favour shown by French to other Alawite leaders made him throw in his lot with the Nationalist bloc, and he was made Mohafiz of the Hauran (1939) and subsequently of the Damascus province whence he was retired in 1941. Lived in retirement at Safita, and was arrested by the Vichy authorities during the battle of Syria. Later released by Fighting French, who did not, however, regard him as reliable. His attitude to the British was equally unreliable. Arrested and interned (May 1943) for alleged contact with Axis. By many his arrest was regarded as a political move by the French against the Nationalists.

A man of many marriages. Lavish, educated, but of limited intelligence, stubborn, courageous and popular in spite of his poverty.

52. Hayani, Taufiq

Sunni Moslem. Born about 1895. From Aleppo. Kaimakam of Douma in 1925 and Governor of Hauran, 1930. Secretary to the Syrian Government after the dismissal of Sheikh Taj ed Din (1932). Acting Governor of Damascus during the elections of April 1932. President of the Municipality of Damascus, 1936, and Mohafiz of Damascus. Dismissed March 1942 and shelved in Council of State whence he was recalled to become Director-General of the Interior on the dismissal of Bahij al Khatib (q.v.) October 1943. Having quarrelled with his Minister (Lutfi Haifar) was appointed Director-General of Posts and Telegraphs August 1944. A pleasant person and has shown himself to be co-operative particularly in putting through contracts for British firms for telecommunication material, Standard telephones contract for example. Has represented Syria on several occasions at Arab League Communications Committee.

53. Hiffel, Sheikh Abd al

Born about 1914. Son of Sheikh Jedaan al Hiffel, the weak and stingy Sheikh of the Agaidat. Sheikh Abdud was elected Deputy for Meyadine in 1943 and again in 1947. Speaks Arabic only but is intelligent and has the personality to command the respect of his followers. As he is still young and untried he is apt to resort to force to assert himself, but is not by nature turbulent. His popularity is on the increase amongst the Agaidat.

54. Hindieh, Grégoire

Armenian Catholic Archbishop of Aleppo. Born 1895. Educated in the Armenian Seminary in Rome. Member of a wealthy Aleppo family with political connexions. A brother was at one time Minister of Finance. Formerly known as a Francophile; after his brother's resignation from the Finance Ministry he became a vehement critic of the French Administration in Syria, and later became just as critical of the Syrian Nationalist Administration.

A prelate whose interests are more temporal than spiritual and who is not much trusted locally.

55. Hiraki, Hikmat

Born about 1895. Prominent Moslem landowner of Maaret-en-Noman (Aleppo region). No political career, but always friendly to the French. Is a farmer and on very good terms with the Bedouins of

his district and with his own tenants, being kindly. Became Minister of Ravitaillement in the Hassan al Hakim Government (September 1941 to April 1942), again in Husni Barazi's Government (April 1942 to January 1943) and again in Jamil Ulshi's Government (January 1943 to March 1943). Was also appointed Assistant to Jamil Ulshi as President of the Wheat Commission. Deputy 1943 for Maaret-en-Noman and again in 1947. Shrewd.

56. Homs, Edmond

Born 1901. Son of Albert Homs, educated A.U.B. Switzerland and England, private banker with interests in Egypt, who did lucrative business with Turks during the 1914 war. Was Syrian Minister of Finance (March to October 1936). Member of Syrian delegation for the conclusion of the Franco-Syrian Treaty in 1936. Elected Nationalist Deputy for Aleppo, December 1936. Took unofficial charge of the British Consulate at Aleppo during 1941 evacuation and has always been outspoken in his British sympathies. Was made honorary Commander of the British Empire. April 1946 appointed Minister of Finance in Saadullah Jabri's third Government when he instituted investigation into irregularities in Finance Ministry. Failed in 1947 elections on President's list. Was at one time a candidate for post of Syrian Minister in London. Is intelligent and pleasant, if somewhat indolent.

57. Horani, Akram

Born Hama about 1915. Sunni Moslem. Lawyer. Extremist leader of Youth Party of Hama. Joined Iraqi revolution 1941 at head of a small number of young men; met German commission in Homs and Aleppo. Deputy 1943, and Secretary of Chamber of Deputies. Intelligent and has considerable influence over young men, including sons of notables, in spite of his anti-feudal views. Was engaged in active agitation against the Feudal Party (Ghaleb Azm, Abdul Qader Kailani (q.v.)) and escaped arrest together with Raif Milqi (q.v.) only by intervention of the Prime Minister (February 1944). A leading member of the Constitutional Liberal Party and a most active critic of the Government. Proprietor and chief editor of *El Yaqza* first published May 1946—which from the first issue has adopted a violently anti-British attitude, and is notable even amongst Syrian newspapers for the inaccuracy of its news. Re-elected Deputy for Hama 1947. Member of Parliamentary Constitutional Party 1948. Actually fought for six weeks with volunteers in Palestine early 1948, and urged severe measures in Government. A man with considerable drive but vain and irresponsible.

58. Hubbi, Yuhanna

Born about 1888 at Jezirat ibn Omar, Turkey. Educated at Catholic College in Mosul, where he worked as teacher and preacher, and later was secretary to the Catholic Mission. Syrian Catholic Archbishop of the Jezirah. A confirmed supporter of the Nationalists, and later of the Separatist Movement in Jezirah. Went to Paris in 1937 with the Syrian Catholic Patriarch, Cardinal Tappouni, and succeeded in securing from the French Government certain additional safeguards for his community in Jezirah, but was obliged to remain in Beirut for a time in 1938. In 1939 was again connected with the Separatist agitation in the Jezirah, which contributed to the downfall of the Nationalist Government in July 1939. During Vichy régime in Syria was pro-Ally and helped Allied troops during the occupation (1941). A keen churchman and an astute politician who ably protects the interests of his flock.

59. Hunaidi, Mohamed al

Born Deir ez Zor about 1890. Sunni Moslem. Rich landlord and ex-president Saleh of Deir ez Zor

Chamber of Commerce. Part-owner of Deir ez Zor Electricity Company and owner of several pumping engines along the Euphrates. Was a supporter of National bloc and linked with Mohamed ei Ayesh (q.v.), being one of his strongest supporters. His son Qasim was elected Deputy for Deir ez Zor 1943.

60. Huraiki, Bishop, Ignatios

Born about 1900. Greek Orthodox Bishop of Hama. As usual with Levant ecclesiastics, more interested in politics than church matters and tries to get his finger in every pie. Plays off Moslems against French. Supporter of Nationalist bloc, was elected vice-president of the Committee for the Defence of Palestine at the Arab Conference in Bludan 1937. At meeting at Aleppo (21st November, 1942) to commemorate Hanano, Nationalist hero, made a speech to the effect that there were no minorities. This roused uproar in the Christian and French circles. A speaker of repute, in July 1947 was sent by Patriarch to Brazil, where he addressed ex-patriate Syrians.

Clever and unscrupulous.

61. Ibish, Nuri al

Born about 1895. Educated at A.U.B. and Cirencester Agricultural College. Appointed by Saadullah Jabri's Government to be Director-General of Tribal Affairs (March 1944) on the cession of the Tribal Department by the French to the Syrians. Resigned November 1946. Elected Deputy for Damascus 1947, receiving highest number of votes cast, which made him aspire to the Presidency. Has spent a great deal of money on the improvement of his farm near Damascus.

62. Ibrahim Pasha, Khalil Bey

Born about 1888 at Veranshehir, in Turkey. Sunni Moslem Kurd, chief of Milli tribe, but disclaimed by many real Kurds as there is a large Arab element in the tribe. Studied in Istanbul; speaks and writes Turkish and Arabic. Wealthy landowner in Ras el Ain; in his time has sided with Turks, Kurds, Arabs, French, British and Germans; a complete bandit and double-crosser, but possesses considerable charm. Elected Deputy for Hassetché 1943, but failed in 1947 to secure re-election.

63. Inglizi, Issam

Born 1913. Educated American University of Beirut and Law College, Damascus. A friend of Sabri el Assali (q.v.), in whose office he was from 1937 to 1939. Practised as a lawyer from 1940 to 1944, when he was appointed head of a Department at the Presidency. Was known to be a sympathiser with the League of National Action and is thought to have been mixed up in the Shahbandar murder. Visited London, November 1945, as one of the secretaries to the Syrian delegation to the preliminary meeting of the United Nations Organisation Conference, and returned favourably impressed with British intentions. Member of Syrian delegation on United Nations Enquiry Committee to Greece and Balkan States, January 1947. Adviser to Syrian delegation to United Nations Assembly, September 1947. Acting Secretary-General of Presidency, February 1948. Speaks excellent English. A somewhat overfed and gross man, and while overtly easy to get on with, he is probably not too reliable.

64. Ishaq, Said Bey

Born 1897. Syrian Orthodox Christian. Elected Christian Deputy for the Jezirah in 1937, despite the opposition of the Syrian Nationalists. Deputy for Kamishli 1943. Controller of the Chamber of Deputies 1943-44, though formerly one of the leaders of the Separatist movement in Jezirah, now supports Syrian unity. Failed 1947 elections.

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65. Jabi, Dr. Rushdi

Born Damascus 1902. Sunni Moslem. Doctor of medicine of American University of Beirut 1926. Doctor to Damascus Municipality 1936. Is more interested in social and political activities than in medicine. Since early 1920's has been associated with Ali Dandashi (q.v.), in Syrian Scout movement. Member of League of National Action (1936) and on good terms with Nationalist bloc, who made use of Jabi's scouts for political demonstrations and propaganda. Implicated in plot against the security of the State and Bahij al Khatib (July 1939) and fled the country to Transjordan, where he established a clinic in Amman. In his absence was sentenced to twenty years' imprisonment and twenty years' banishment, and only returned to Syria in 1941, when charges against him had been dropped. In 1942 appointed president of Higher Scouting Committee and participated in movement to oppose affiliation of Scouts with Syrian Ministry of Youth and helped Rashid Ali to make his journey to Saudi Arabia 1945. Eventually came to terms and was nominated head of Higher Scout Committee. His brother Jamil (now defunct), also a member of the League of National Action (a Germanophile), fled the country on the Allied occupation. After the failure of his private practice in Damascus Dr. Rushdi secured the appointment of Director of Health in Latakia (April 1944). Sent to England, September 1946, on a medical mission. Appointed Director of Health in Aleppo early in 1948.

No a prominent nor pleasing personality in spite of his position.

66. Jabri, Ihsan Bey al

Born Aleppo about 1885. Brother of the late Saadullah al Jabri. Deputy for Aleppo in the Parliament at Constantinople during the Turkish régime and for a time aide-de-camp to the Sultan. Returned to Aleppo after the war and proceeded to Damascus, where he was Chamberlain to King Faisal during the latter's short reign. Fled with King Faisal at the time of the French occupation of Damascus, first to Palestine and then to Iraq. In 1924 he was delegated by the Syrian Arabs to go to Geneva to uphold the cause of Syrian independence at the League of Nations in company with the Druse leader, the Emir Shakib Arslan. Sentenced by the French to permanent banishment from Syria and remained in Europe working for Syrian independence from 1924 to 1937. Amnestied in April 1937 and was Mohafiz of Latakia in November 1937 to April 1939. Was actively associated with bread strikes in Aleppo, March 1941. Arrested by the British in Aleppo in September 1942 as potentially dangerous, but released in September 1943. Failed in 1947 elections; president of the Aleppo branch of National Party 1948. An enthusiastic Nationalist of influence who still has personal ambitions.

67. Jabri, Mejd ed Din Bey

Born in 1910, son of Kemal Bey Jabri and nephew of Saadullah Bey Jabri; married to Hale, daughter of Ihsan Bey Jabri (brother of Saadullah Bey). Educated at Aleppo and for five years at Robert College, Istanbul. Spent three years, 1932 to 1935, in United States (B.A., Illinois University) where he studied engineering. Served for six years in the Public Works Department of the Palestine Government and seconded for service in Transjordan (1937-43). Secretary-General of Aleppo Municipality 1944-45 and President of the Municipality since July 1946. Well educated, practical, moderate and less susceptible to party and family influences than most Arabs. Devotes his little spare time to exploiting his father's many estates. Speaks excellent English and good French; the main hope for the future of the Jabri family.

68. Jebara, Hassan Bey

Alawite. Born about 1897 at Alexandretta, where he was educated in the French Collège des Frères. Worked in the Deutsche Palestina Bank and on the Bagdad Railway before the 1914 war. After the armistice of 1918 he supported the French, and in 1942 was appointed Director of the Finance Department in the Sanjak of Alexandretta. Went to Geneva in 1937 to assist the League of Nations experts in drawing up the statute of the sanjak. Supported the Alawite element in the sanjak, which he has done much to organise. Expelled from Alexandretta in August 1938 and appointed Director of Finance at Aleppo later in that year. Appointed Director-General of Finance by Khaled el Azm in April 1941 and combined this with the directorate of Supply for one year. Inspector of Trade Disputes, 1943; Minister of Ravitaillement in Fares Khouri's second Government April to August 1945. Minister of Ravitaillement in Fares Khouri's third Government August to October 1945. Minister of National Economy and acting Minister of Ravitaillement and Government Representative MIRA in Saadullah Jabri's second Government October 1945 to April 1946; acting Minister of Finance from December 1945. Reverted to Director-General of Finance and appointed Government representative on Supreme Council of Common Interests May 1946. Syrian representative (April 1947) on International Trade Organisation. Syrian delegate to Havana Conference on trade and employment November 1947. Appointed Secretary-General of Ministry of Finance March 1948. On several occasions represented Syria on Arab League Financial Committee. Being born in the Hatay, he bitterly resents its cession to Turkey, especially as the Turks confiscated his property there. Until outbreak of war was *persona non grata* to Turks.

An able financier and believed to be honest, though he has been accused in the press of being party to financial irregularities in the Ministry of Finance. A timorous personality, although of stubborn character. Not liked on account of his coldness.

69. Jneid, Mohamed

Born about 1885. Alawite, Chief of the Rasha-winah section of the Kalbiah tribe living at Salhab in the Masiaf district. Is very popular with his tribe. Owner of extensive properties on which he has recently redeemed the mortgage. Is paid by the Syrian Tobacco Monopoly to suppress tobacco smuggling, but is believed, nevertheless, to help smugglers. On bad terms with Suleiman Murshed (*q.v.*), jealous of the Abbas and Kinj families. Deputy for Masiaf in Syrian Parliament, 1937. Middle aged, calm and reasonable, kept on good terms with the Administration and the French as he considered this to be in the interest of his tribe. For this reason the other leaders in Alawite area and in Syria regard him as spineless. Elected Deputy for Masiaf 1943, and again in 1947.

70. Kabbara, Sami

Born Damascus 1904. Sunni Moslem. Doctor of law of Montpellier and Geneva. Diplôme of the "Institut des Hautes Etudes de Droit International." Chief Clerk to the Speaker of the Syrian Parliament 1932-33. Owner and editor of newspaper *Al Nidal*.

As a personal friend of the late Dr. Shahbandar, is opposed to the Nationalists. Although he failed to be elected in 1943, he secured the most votes of any non-Nationalist candidate. Succeeded in 1947, but rarely attends Chamber because he gets little support for his advocacy of a broad-based Government. A well-educated man.

71. Kailani Akram

Born 1905. Speaks English and a little French. His family own village of Beit Sawa in the Damascus

Ghoutha. Helped Shukri Quwatli in 1943 elections on whose list he hoped to appear for election, but he did not do so; became dissatisfied with the present régime. Suspected of having helped Raschid Ali to go to Saudi Arabia. In 1946 was actively touring Syria contacting notables throughout the country on behalf of King Abdullah and reporting somewhat over optimistically on the successes attending his efforts. Since then he has been running a Greater Syria bureau in the Lebanon, and has kept in constant touch with supporters in the Levant States and with King Abdulla. He is a petty intriguer with little personality.

72. Kailani, Saadi (Shami Pir)

Born about 1904 in Damascus. Brother of Akram Kailani (*q.v.*). Made no secret of his admiration for the Germans, and after the British occupation of Syria in 1941 reappeared in Waziristan where he is known to have stirred up tribesmen to join in a rebellion against the Afghan Government. Was found in the British Zone of Germany in the autumn of 1945; representations were made by the Foreign Office to the War Office that all possible steps should be taken to prevent him returning to Syria. The India Office took the same view as regards India. He returned to Damascus, however, in July 1946 in a French ship. Failed in 1947 elections. As a result of high gambling and election expenses his finances are shaky. A cruel and ruthless person of considerable ability, who would probably be ready to support any régime from which he could expect to benefit.

73. Kayali, Abdurrahman

Born 1890. Educated in the American University of Beirut. Married into the Mudarres family. King Faisal's Chamberlain at Damascus. Prominent Nationalist but inclined to preach moderation. Elected Nationalist Deputy for Aleppo in 1936. Minister of Education and of Justice in the former Nationalist Government. Went to Geneva in December 1936, to put forward the Arab claim for Alexandretta. Sent from Damascus to Aleppo in February 1937 to apologise to the French for the Iron Shirt clash with the French Gendarmerie. Minister of Education and Justice in the second Jamil Mardam Cabinet (July 1937 to February 1939). Minister of National Economy in the Lutfi Haffar Cabinet (February to March 1939). His moderate party was swamped in July 1943 elections by Saadullah Jabri, but he was eventually elected himself and was Minister for Justice in Saadullah Jabri's first Government August 1943 to October 1944. Minister of Justice and Minister of Public Works in Fares Khouri's first Government October 1944 to April 1945. Since he left the Government he has become a leading member of the Constitutional Liberal Party and has lost no opportunity of attacking succeeding Governments in the Chamber of Deputies. Failing in 1947 elections, but still aspires to be Prime Minister. His influence is probably less than might be expected. Intelligent, but not masterful.

74. Kecati, Rudolphe

Born 1885 in Cairo. Roman Catholic. Doctor of law of Paris. Lawyer for the Damascus Municipality 1931-39. Was owner and editor (assisted by his son André) of Damascus French language daily *Le Matin* which was suppressed after the events of May 1945 to reappear in French for one day three months later but was finally converted into an Arab language daily *Al Zaman* in January 1946. D.N.B. agent at Damascus from 1938 to beginning of war. Supported Axis whenever it paid him in Vichy year. On assumption of power by Nationalist Government in 1943 showed himself a French tool.

Complete opportunist and clever lawyer.

75. Kekhia, Rushdi

Born 1905. Belongs to a well-known Aleppo Moslem family. Studied law at Damascus University. Elected Deputy for Aleppo December 1936, he became known for his vehement speeches in the Syrian Assembly. Resigned from the National *bloc* March 1939. Deputy for Aleppo in 1943 in opposition to both the Jabri and Kayali groups, and remained opposed to them in Parliament, re-elected in 1947 on list of Parliamentary Constitutional Party, he has on several occasions refused to accept a Ministry. A man of some character and seriousness of purpose but not much brain; has not yet succeeded in gaining much influence outside the Constitutional Party.

76. Khankan, Rifa'at, Lieut.-Colonel

Born 1904 in Damascus of Kurdish origin from Khanaquin. Educated American University of Beirut and in Damascus Military School. Studied St. Cyr Military School and elsewhere in France. Appointed to Chief of Staff's Office in Beirut 1936 and to First Bureau of Troupes Spéciales, Beirut, 1942. Assistant Officer Commanding Coastguards 1944-45. Resigned from Troupes Spéciales just before events of May 1945. Officer Commanding Desert Force, June 1945-April 1946. Appointed Chief of Staff Syrian Army, April 1946 but was shortly afterwards posted as commander of the 1st Liwa. Speaks French, Turkish and a little English. Does not belong to any political party. Not very impressive, but well-disposed.

77. Khatib, Bahij Bey al

Born about 1893 in the Lebanon and educated at the American College, Beirut. Appointed a Government clerk in Faisal's Administration (1919-20) and went to Palestine on the occupation of Syria by the French. He returned in 1923 and obtained a minor Government post. During the revolt of 1925-26 Bahij Bey served in the Ministry of the Interior and earned the reputation of being a pro-French official. He afterwards served under Sheikh Taj ed Din in 1928 and as private secretary to Haqqi Bey al Azm in 1932, thus incurring the displeasure of the Nationalist Party. He was then sent as Mohafiz to Deir ez Zor until 1934, when Sheikh Taj ed Din, once more Prime Minister, appointed him Administrative Inspector in the Ministry of the Interior. He also filled the posts of head of the municipality and Director-General of Police. In 1937 the Nationalist Party, who had come into power, dislodged him on account of his alleged pro-French sympathies. He was, however, retained in Government service on French insistence and did much to quieten down the situation in the Jebel Druse, where he went as administrator in November 1937. Did equally good work in the Jezirah in 1939. When Nationalist Government under Jamil Mardam was dissolved and the Constitution suspended, he became (9th July, 1939) President of the Council of Directors, a Government of civil servants. He administered Syria wisely and efficiently until April 1941, when the council was replaced by the Khaled al Azm Government. In June 1939 a group including Najib and Munir Rayess, and believed to have been hired by Nationalists, plotted to murder him, but the plot was discovered and culprits arrested. They were subsequently released at the orders, it is believed, of the Italian Disarmament Commission (November 1940). During the Khaled al Azm Government Bahij occupied his old post of Inspector-General of the Interior, but on formation of Sheikh Taj ed Din's Government (September 1941) he reluctantly (on French pressure) accepted appointment of Acting Minister of Interior. Had several disagreements with the French over their non-implementation of promise of independence and with the President over his interference with internal departmental affairs. When Cabinet was reformed after fall of Hassan al Hakim (18th April, 1942), Bahij again reverted to

post of Inspector-General. Shortly after the accession to power of Nationalists in August 1943, was first relegated to post of Mohafiz of Damascus Province and later placed on retired list (October 1943). Withdrew to Lebanon and was told by Government not to return to Damascus, as they feared him to be a French tool; alleged to have been included in the Quisling Government which was to have been set up after the events of May 1945. He is younger brother of Sheikh Fuad al Khatib, prominent figure of Arab revolt, and later councillor to the Emir Abdullah of Transjordan, a great Arab poet and Anglophil.

He has earned the unusual reputation of being a painstaking and honest public servant. Speaks French and English fluently. Not above political intrigue, for which he is well placed, owing to his wide contacts. He would almost certainly return to a position of importance in Syria should there be a change of régime.

78. Khoja, Hamid

Born 1907 of a family of religious teachers. Educated at the Franciscan School at Aleppo and at the Teachers' Training College, Aleppo. Studied law in Paris, where he obtained his degree. Deputy for Raqqa 1932-36 and again 1943. Appointed Kaimakam 1937 first at Ziyiyeh and then at Jerablous. A leading member of the Constitutional Liberal Party, he failed in the 1947 elections as the result of the intervention of the Syrian President in favour of his own candidate. He is therefore hostile to the President and favours King Abdullah. His influence might prove important in the tribal area where he is the recognised political leader of a number of influential tribal sheiks. Has shown readiness to co-operate with the British and is an agreeable and cultivated individual.

79. Khouri, Fares al

Born about 1875. Brother of Faiz Khouri (*q.v.*). Educated at American College at Beirut. Was a dragoman at British Consulate, Damascus, from 1899 to 1909. A member of the Turkish Parliament in 1913. Lawyer. Minister of Finance under Faisal, when he discreetly lined his pockets. Minister of Public Instruction under Damad, 1926. Departed some months later on suspicion of assisting rebels, thus winning martyr's crown of glory and confidence of Moslems. Well-off. Chairman of board of directors of National Cement Company; was professor of the School of Law, but resigned in 1941; legal adviser to the municipality until 1942, when he passed it to his son Suhail. Took leading part in the general strike of 1936. Went to Paris in March 1936 as member of the Nationalist delegation to negotiate a Franco-Syrian treaty. Deputy, December 1936. Elected President of the Chamber of Deputies (Speaker) on 21st December, 1936, in recognition of his services to the Nationalist *bloc* in the treaty negotiations. From fall of Nationalist Government in 1939, played no active part in politics until 1943, when he was re-elected Deputy by a bare majority and again in 1947. President of the Chamber August 1943 to October 1944 and again October 1945 to October 1946. Prime Minister and Minister for Interior and for Education, October 1944 to April 1945. Member of Syrian Committee which signed Charter of Arab League, March 1945; Prime Minister April to August 1945. Head of Syrian Delegation to United Nations Organisation Conference at San Francisco April 1945. Prime Minister August to October 1945. Head of Syrian Delegation to United Nations Organisation Conference at London, November 1945, and to Round Table Conference on Palestine in London August 1946 and to United Nations General Assembly Session October 1947. Syrian Representative on Security Council December 1946. Is a prudent and skilful, if unscrupulous, politician, who is, despite his religion, on good terms with the Moslems and

not with the Christians. Talks excellent English. A likable but obstinate old man, but his age and heart trouble have made him incapable of withstanding the rough and tumble of Syrian politics.

80. Khouri, Faiz al

Born about 1891. Greek Orthodox. Educated by Irish Presbyterian Mission, at American College, Beirut, and at Law School, Istanbul. Originally Protestant, but converted to Orthodoxy in 1935 as latter community had representative in Chamber and Protestants had not. Elected to the Constituent Assembly, 1928, as mouthpiece for his brother Fares (q.v.). Noted Nationalist. Dean of the Faculty of Law at the Syrian University, Damascus, from year 1941 to 1943. Nationalist Deputy in 1932 with great following among university students. Played a leading part in the first session of Parliament and again during the general strike of 1936. Re-elected Deputy in December 1936. Head of the Damascus Bar, 1936 to 1940. Minister of Finance and Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs in the fifteen day ministry of Lutfi Haffar, 1939. Minister for Foreign Affairs under Hassan al Hakim, September 1941 to April 1942, and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister of Finance in Husni Barazi Government (April 1942 to January 1943). Took strong line with the French over concessions of form to Syrian independence, but was unsuccessful. In agreement with Lebanese, struggled to obtain control of "Intérêts Communs." Framed budget for 1942 balanced (on paper) with proceeds from new taxes on income and agriculture. Was president of Commission supérieure to monopolise Syrian wheat, and displayed considerable energy and courage. Was attacked by landlords, &c., as being a Christian and corrupt, and forced to resign presidency of Wheat Office in July 1942. When Jemil Ulshi replaced Husni Barazi as Prime Minister (January 1943) Faiz Khouri gave up the Ministry of Finance, retaining only the Ministry for Foreign Affairs; one of the reasons for this being that it was felt that, as a Christian, he was not in a strong position to enforce taxation projects. He remained in office until the fall of the Ulshi Government, March 1943. His association with the non-parliamentary régime of 1941-43 brought him into disfavour with the Nationalists, who refused to include him on their electoral list. He stood as an independent and failed, retiring to Beirut where he remained for a year. Appointed Minister Plenipotentiary to Moscow April 1945; remaining there for a few months only as Acting Director-General Ministry for Foreign Affairs, October to December 1945. Placed on pension 1946. Appointed Syrian Minister to Washington, June 1947.

A man of moderate political opinions and considerable intelligence with undoubted ambition but has the reputation of being difficult to work with. Speaks good English and French. Despite his religion, is on good terms with Moslems.

81. Kinj, Ali al

Born 1895. Alawite. Brother of Ibrahim (q.v.). Director of the Interior in the Alawite Administration 1939-43. Was exiled by Free French, together with Shawkat Abbas for some time during the summer of 1941, but later returned to his position. Was dismissed in January 1943 by Damascus Government. The Abbas family tend to defend him as they use him for his influence over his brother Ibrahim (q.v.), who fears him. Uncouth, unintelligent, dishonest, tactless, intriguer. Detested generally, especially by Christians. Refused a minor Government post early in 1943 and has been disgruntled ever since.

82. Kinj, Ibrahim

Born about 1880. Alawite, of peasant stock. Has risen to the leadership of the Hadadin tribe during the last twenty to thirty years, having wrested it from the Al Hamid family. Appointed president of

Alawite Administrative Council in 1931. In 1936 opposed the union of the Alawite Province with the Syrian State and Alawite representation in the Syrian Parliament. Since 1918 has backed the mandatory Power, and was on good terms with the Abbas family (q.v.). In 1943 he led an election campaign against the Mohafiz of Latakia, and as a result failed to be elected in his own Qaza of Jebel. By time-serving politics and by tobacco, hashish and even arms smuggling, has accumulated both land and wealth. In politics was openly opposed to the National bloc. Bluff, more diplomatic than his brother Ali, ill-educated, but shrewd and popular owing to his lavish generosity and hospitality.

83. Lian, Mikhael Michel

Born Aleppo 1900. Greek Orthodox. Educated American University, Beirut. Professes an extreme form of nationalism. Was secretary at Aleppo of the Nationalist bloc before he was elected Deputy for Aleppo in July 1943. In August 1945 he organised a large number of Deputies to present a petition to the President of the Chamber asking for the resignation of Fares Khouri's second Government. August to November 1945 Minister for Foreign Affairs in Fares Khouri's third Government. April to December 1946 Minister of Public Works in Saadullah Jabri's third Government. Speaks some English and French and has shown himself anxious to be well regarded by the British. He is an assiduous political intriguer and enjoyed Saadullah Jabri's support but otherwise appears to be stupid and incompetent. Failed in the 1947 elections on the President's list.

84. Maasarani, Abdul Hadi Ben Abdullah

Moslem. Born about 1905. A Homs merchant and local representative of the Shell Company. A redoubtable leader of the National bloc, and former chief of the Nazi-inspired Arab Guard; has a considerable reputation for physical courage and Xenophobia. Commanded a troop in Ibn Saud's Wahabi columns against the Hashemite forces during the last war, later fought against the French in King Feisal's desperate rearguard action in Messaloun; took part in the revolution of 1925, fighting in Fawzi Kawakgi's forces at El-Ghota and Baalbek, afterwards joined the National bloc and is suspected of having taken part, financially if not personally, in both the Palestine and Iraq rebellions. Interned in 1936 by the French and was again interned in 1942 for security reasons; released in 1943.

85. Maasarani, Haj Sulaiman

Born, Homs, about 1905 of humble family. Sunni Moslem. Chemist. Extreme Nationalist who, by demagogic methods, acquired political influence. President of Muslim Orphanage, Homs, and was local secretary of National bloc. Nationalist Deputy, 1936. Several times imprisoned between June and October 1942 for harbouring Palestinian rebels. Owns and edits *Al Duha*, a newspaper in Homs and enjoys the protection of Shukri Quwatli (q.v.).

86. Mahasin, Said

Born about 1885. Poor Damascus family. Educated Constantinople. Lawyer. Minister of Interior under Taj ed Din, 1928-30. Rigged elections to the Constituent Assembly, 1928. Was attacked by Nationalists and jettisoned by Taj ed Din. A professed monarchist and attacks the present régime on every occasion. Head of the Damascus Bar (1940 to 1942). Professor of civil law in the Syrian University. One of the best lawyers in Damascus (a partner of Sami Midani).

87. Maloyan, Hrant, Colonel

Armenian Catholic. Born Istanbul 1895; graduate of Istanbul College; teacher Military College Istanbul 1915-16. Took part in 1914-18 war with 53rd Turkish Division at Ghaza. Chief of the Armenian

Division in the French army at Beirut in 1918. As second lieutenant took part in occupation of Adana and Cilicia; promoted to rank of captain 1918; was appointed to Syrian Gendarmerie at Aleppo, Acre and Antioch 1921 to 1925, during Syrian revolution was transferred to Damascus 1925-26 in charge of Gendarmerie Transport Company; from 1935-37 was Officer Commanding, Gendarmerie Hama, Deir-ez-Zor and Euphrates. 1939-41 Officer Commanding, Gendarmerie, Damascus, Mohafazat. 1942-45 was promoted to rank of lieutenant-colonel and appointed Officer Commanding, Gendarmerie, First Legion. In August 1945 was promoted to rank of colonel and appointed acting Commandant-General of Gendarmerie. He speaks Arabic, English, French, Turkish, Greek, Italian and Armenian.

Extremely able and intelligent and it is largely due to his capability that the Syrian Gendarmerie has been reorganised and has reached a reasonable standard of efficiency. It is doubtful, however, whether he will be able to retain his position in view of his Armenian descent.

He has shown himself ready to co-operate with the British authorities and at times is inclined to be too friendly for the good of his reputation as a Syrian official.

88. Marashli, Haj Fateh al

Born about 1890. Member of a wealthy Aleppo Moslem family. Notorious pro-Turk during 1914 war, but joined Ibrahim Hanano in the rebellion which he organised against the French and fought with him till 1921, when he escaped to Turkey, where he owns villages near the Syrian frontier, and settled in Gazi Aintap. Opted for Turkish nationality and is still *persona grata* to the Turks, in whose interest he is still reputed to be working, despite the gratitude lavished on him by the Syrian Nationalists. Returned to Aleppo in April 1937 on the proclamation of the amnesty and was accorded a triumphal reception. Is now living quietly.

89. Mardam, Haidar Bey

Brother-in-law of Jamil Mardam Bey. Born Damascus, 1898. Graduated from Law School, Damascus, 1923. Married Damascus Christian and went to France to study law for several years. Secretary to municipality 1929-30. In 1936 Kaimakam at Ma'arat. January 1938 (Nationalist Government) "chef du protocole" in the Foreign Office and in March 1938 appointed Acting Mohafiz of Jezirah. In July 1939 Kaimakam of Idlib. In August 1941 appointed Mohafiz of Homs, where he remained until June 1942, when he was dismissed because he was suspected by Syrian Government of carrying information to French. In August 1942 he was appointed to Foreign Office as "chef du protocole." Mohafiz of Hauran, April 1943 to March 1946, when he was transferred to the central office at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, but refused to take up his post as it was graded lower in rank than that of Mohafiz. While Mohafiz of the Hauran he was suspected by the Government of being in suspiciously close touch with Amman, but was the first to "clean up" French in 1945, when he seems to have shown energy, courage and ability to handle a fluid situation, and firmness tempered with justice towards a defeated enemy. Appointed Syrian Minister to Jedda in March 1947.

Mildly Nationalist in politics, pleasant and open-minded, but rather lacking in energy.

90. Mardam, Jamil

Born about 1890. Nationalist member of Constituent Assembly 1928. Deputy in 1932 and Minister of Finance. Was a member of the Nationalist delegation that went to Paris in March 1936 and became Prime Minister and Minister of National Economy December 1936 to July 1937. He formed new Cabinet July 1937, but his Government was attacked, notably by Dr. Shahbandar and Munir Ajlani, over the 1936 Franco-Syrian Treaty. Relations between

Mardam and Shahbandar continued to deteriorate until the former was forced to resign. He and his Cabinet were openly accused by the press of great corruption and peculation. When Shahbandar was murdered in July 1940 Jamil Mardam was accused by the Shahbandarists of complicity and, with a few others, fled to Bagdad. Was in Bagdad at beginning of Rashid Ali revolt (May 1941), but is believed to have exerted moderating influence on rebels. Returned to Syria May 1941.

In January 1942 he went to Egypt, and, on his return, tried to provoke a political crisis by pretending that he enjoyed the confidence of the British, who had asked him to form a Government. He repeated this manoeuvre with greater insistence in June 1942. As a result, the Allies obliged him to live in the Lebanon and a communiqué was issued condemning his action. Elected Deputy in 1943 and in 1947 on Shukri Quwatli's list. Minister for Foreign Affairs and president of Cereals Commission in Saadullah Jabri's first Government, August 1943 to October 1944. Syrian representative on the Committee of Foreign Ministers of Arab Countries which met in Cairo in February 1945 to draw up Arab League Charter. Minister for Foreign Affairs and for Defence and Government representative to Supreme Mira Council in Fares Khouri's first Government, October 1944 to April 1945. Minister for Foreign Affairs and for Defence in Fares Khouri's second Government, April to August 1945; Acting Prime Minister during the Prime Minister's absence at U.N.O. Conference in San Francisco and was therefore head of the Government at the time of the events of May 1945. Appointed Minister Plenipotentiary to Cairo, October 1945, and also to Saudi Arabia, October 1945, and presided at November 1945 session of Arab League, and on several other occasions has represented Syria at Arab League Meetings. Prime Minister and Minister of Interior and Health December 1946 to February 1947. Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs April 1947. Appointed Military Governor Syria 15th May, 1948. Minister of Defence 23rd May, 1948.

Foxy, *souple* and a trimmer. A man of great ambition and considerable ability, but not very scrupulous in money matters. Is probably the most likely of the leading members of the old National bloc to ally himself with a monarchical movement if he thought his interests lay that way.

91. Maizer ibn Abdul Muhsen el Jarba, Sheikh

Born 1907. Became head of the tribe of Shammar of Zor in 1907, when French recognised him instead of Mishaal al Fares. Distant cousin of Daham al Hadi (q.v.), who aspires to his place. Deputy 1936-39. In 1941 had contacts with German Armistice Commission in Beirut. Deputy in 1943 and 1947 for Bardiat el Jezireh.

Of a peaceful disposition and weak in character. Was always led by French.

92. Malki, Abdul Wahhab el

Born 1898. Graduated at Istanbul Engineering College and at the Bridges and Roads College, Paris. Chief of Technical Bureau of Ministry of Public Works 1923, but resigned in 1927 after disagreeing with the French adviser and worked as a private contractor. Director-general of the Hejaz Railway from February 1945. He is an intimate friend of Khalid el Azm and runs an experimental farm as a hobby. He is capable and friendly.

93. Midani, Abdul Qader el

Born 1913, studied at the French Engineering College for Bridges and Roads in Paris in 1931-32 and, after graduating from the Law College, Damascus, in 1935, practised as barrister. Was a prominent member of the League of National Action and was interned for a year at Rashiya in 1942 with other members of the League. Secretary of the

Lawyers' Syndicate in 1934, Mohafez of Jezireh, August 1945 to January 1948. He is an intelligent young man and appears to have taken a real interest in the work of administration of the Jezireh. He is a loyal supporter of Shukri Quwatli.

94. Milqi, Raif

Born Hama about 1905 of humble family. Sunni Moslem. Lawyer. Extreme Nationalist and fomenter of riots. Very intelligent and has great influence over the masses, who support his anti-feudal policy. Sincerely believes in his cause. Is prepared to use violence. Deputy for Hama 1943 but failed in 1947, has become a leading member of the Constitutional Liberal Party and joint editor of *Al Yaqza* with Akram Hourani (q.v.). Had a reputation in Parliament for demagogic oratory, which is usually of the most violent type directed against someone or something.

95. Mirzo, Ghaleb

Born in 1892, started in Government service as a clerk in the Ministry of Justice, later became a magistrate, President of the Court of First Instance and member of the Court of Appeal, 1944-46. Mohafez of Deir-ez-Zor, 1946-48 Director-General of Police, appointed Mohafez of Hauran, January 1948. He is a Kurd and his enemies look down on him for his lack of education, but he is, however, a friend of Shukri Quwatli, and he has shown himself ruthless in putting down disturbances or demonstrations hostile to the President. He is extremely deaf and speaks very poor Arabic, Turkish and Kurdish being his first languages.

96. Mohammed, Said Agha el

Born at Amouda 1899. A Sunni Moslem Kurd and religious fanatic. Writes some Arabic, speaks Turkish and Kurdish. Chief of Dakourieh tribe. Took a leading part in Christian massacres in 1937; fled to Iraq, but returned in 1942. A letter exists in his handwriting calling on Kurds in the name of their religion to fight the British. Elected Deputy for Qamichlié in 1943. Strong and unruly, but influential in his district.

97. Mudarres, Mohamed Khalil

Born 1894. Member of a family of wealthy Aleppo landowners who have a perpetual feud with the Jabris (q.v.). President of the Aleppo Cotton Spinning Company. Moderate in politics. Appointed Minister of Finance in the Ministry of Nassouhi al Bukhari (March-May 1939). Was several times consulted by Sheikh Taj ed Din in 1942 with a view to his becoming a Minister in the Syrian Government, but is reputed to have refused any office unless it was that of Prime Minister. He did not therefore become a member of the Cabinet. His brother, Ahmed, was elected Deputy 1943. Industrious and well respected; is a friend of Jamil Mardam Bey and Edmond Homsî.

98. Mujhem ben Muhaid, Amir

Born about 1885. Bedouin chief, head of the Fedaan Wuld tribe in the Jezirah and Euphrates region. Given the title of Amir and awarded the Legion of Honour by the French in 1921 on the model of the chiefs of the Rualla. Deputy for Jezirah in 1936, 1943 and 1947. Has well-armed forces and has been supported since 1920 by the French though he is careful not to offend the British. Of considerable importance but unpleasant, cold and astute in character, likely to turn any emergency to his advantage. Always wears black spectacles. His eldest son, Nouri, lacks his fathers' dignity and astuteness.

99. Murabet, Jawad el

Born 1905, graduated from the Law College, Damascus, and the Sorbonne. 1925-26 secretary of

the Mixed Tribunals at Damascus, 1926-28 secretary of Damascus Municipal Council, 1928-29 chief of Municipal Technical Office, 1929-37 chief of Diwan of the Administrative Governor of Damascus, 1937-38 Chief of Police, Lattakia, 1930-40 Director in the Ministry of Interior, 1940-41 secretary of the Council of Directors and Director of Press and Information, 1942 Mohafez of Deir-ez-Zor, Mohafez of Hauran for a few months in 1942, inspector of the Ministry of Interior 1943-45, Director of Administration in Ministry for Foreign Affairs November 1944 to March 1946. Appointed Mohafez of Damascus Province March 1946. He has on several recent occasions been Director of the Pilgrimage. Though a somewhat fanatical Moslem he is an active freemason and a leading brother in the Scottish Lodge at Damascus.

100. Murad, Leon

Born in Aleppo about 1900 of Armenian stock, and was a clerk in French delegation there. On account of his efficiency in this capacity was transferred to the High Commission in Beirut, where he remained on the economic side. Director of Ravitaillement for Syria August 1942 to December 1943 during which period he is believed to have lined his pockets. Syrian representative on Supreme Council of Common Interests January 1944 to June 1946. Director of Syrian Mira June 1946 to January 1947. Appointed Secretary-General of Ministry of National Economy October 1946, and has shown himself suspicious of the two British advisers. Has the reputation of being efficient but difficult and disagreeable to work with.

101. Murhej, Farid

Born Hama about 1900. Greek Orthodox. Wealthy landowner of Hama, who habitually indulges in smuggling. Cultivates friendship of Moslems, with whom he is well established. Enjoys support of Bishop Hureiki (q.v.). Deputy for Hama 1943 and Controller in the Chamber of Deputies October 1945 to October 1946.

An attractive personality but entirely self interested.

102. Murshed, Sheikh, Rakan

Born about 1905. Bedouin chief. Head of the small but predatory Saba's tribe (Bteinat), which is usually encamped in the Salimiyeh district. Deputy for the Damascus tribes 1936-39. A sheikh after the novelist's heart. Generous to the poor but a fierce ruler. Realises that the nomadic life of the Bedouins is doomed to extinction and is now actively sedentarising his people. Elected Deputy for Palmyra tribal area 1943 and in 1947.

103. Namy, Damad Ahmed

Born about 1885. Circassian origin. Grandfather was Emir Mahmoud and Governor of Tripoli. Father was Fakhro Bey and had large estates in Beirut. Ahmed Namy was son-in-law of Abdul Hamid and retains, rather questionably, the title of Damad, although divorced. Became Chief of State of Syria 1926-28 at a critical moment and worked conscientiously at a policy of conciliation. The French High Commissioner dropped him without ceremony and replaced him by Taj ed Din. Supported Nationalists in the Advisory Council 1931. Still clings to the hope of being made King of Syria. Has far less political influence than he thinks due to the fact that (a) he lives in Beirut, (b) he is a Circassian and not an Arab and (c) he has a Christian wife.

Well meaning, dignified, perhaps a little fatuous.

104. Nizam ed Din, Abdul Baqi

Born 1903 in the Nassibain, Turkey, where his father was Kaimakam. Elementary education. Is recognised as a political leader of Moslems in the Jezirah. Was elected Deputy in 1943 with French

support, but since then has professed strong independent Arab views, and was re-elected in 1947. Owns large properties, from which he draws his income. Reported to have sympathised with the revolt of Rashid Ali in Iraq.

105. Qitami, Oqla

Born about 1883. Residence Kharaba. Greek Orthodox. Leading Christian of Jebel Druse. Supporter of Atrash family, who use him as contact man. Was protégé of Emir Selim el Atrash. Education Arabic only. Said to be bastard son of Shibli Bey el Atrash. Sultan Pasha and Qitami were awarded pension by Syrian Government (1942) for their part in 1925 revolt. Deputy for minorities in Jebel Druse 1943.

Influential and intelligent. An intriguer who was viewed with great suspicion by the French; is in close contact with King Abdullah on behalf of the Atrash family. Professes to be pro-British.

106. Qudmani, Abdul Ghani

Born 1890. Enlisted in the Turkish gendarmerie and obtained a commission in the Turkish army 1914-18 war. Held a number of posts in the Syrian gendarmerie from 1920 to 1942, when he had risen to the rank of major. Mohafiz and Commander of the Gendarmerie, Hama, 1942-43. Assistant Commander-General of Gendarmerie and Director-General of Police, March-December 1943. Private A.D.C. to Shukri Quwatli, January 1944 to April 1945. Inspector-General of Gendarmerie since April 1945. Appointed President of Gendarmerie Military Courts, April 1948. A man of little education and stupid, but sly, and for several years past has been intriguing against his superior, Colonel Hrant Maloyan (q.v.). Dependent on his influence with the President and members of the National Party.

107. Qudmani, Fuad

Born Damascus about 1900. As a result of serving as a clerk in a lawyer's office, was "tolerated" as a lawyer about 1920. Of no importance until he became member of Shahbandar Party in 1938. Remaining loyal to his chief, when latter was murdered, he shared with Babil (q.v.) the leadership of the party.

Elected Dean of the Damascus Bar in October 1942 to 1944 after elections, whose validity was challenged by his opponents.

Not very intelligent and rather unpopular, but pro-British. Tried to organise an opposition to Nationalist Government, 1944. Elected president of Confederation of Lawyers' Syndicates June 1946, and again in 1947.

108. Qudsi, Nazem

Born 1906 in Aleppo. Lawyer. Active during troubles of February 1936. Resigned from Nationalist bloc March 1939 and has since been in opposition to the bloc. Considered suitable in 1941 as British propagandist, but refused pay. Suggested for position in Syrian Cabinet in March 1942, but his candidature was ruled out by the Allies on account of his past xenophobe record. Elected Deputy in July 1943 and in 1947, and worked with Rushdi Kekhîa (q.v.) as reasonable critic of Government; refused Cabinet rank. Minister Plenipotentiary to United States January 1945 to August 1946. Member of Syrian Delegation to U.N.O. Conference at San Francisco April 1945. Member of Syrian Delegation to U.N.O. Conference at London November 1945. Prominent member of Parliamentary Constitutional Party. He realises that Syria cannot stand without friends and may perhaps be working for closer relations with British.

109. Quwatli, Shukri

Born about 1886. Supporter of Faisal. During the rebellion of 1925 afforded every assistance to the rebels. He fled to Palestine, but returned to

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Syria in 1931. Vice-president of the Nationalist bloc at its inception. Made Finance Minister and Defence Minister (combined) in Jamil Mardam's Cabinet on 21st December, 1936. As head of his own party (Istiklal), but allied with the Nationalists, was bitterly opposed to Council of Directors, but until French armistice (June 1940) did not take overt political action. He was in close contact with the Italian Disarmament Commission during the whole of their stay here and was a constant caller on the Italian Consulate in Damascus. Met Roser, the German Agent, several times during the latter's stay in Syria. On arrival of Allies was openly opposed to them and judged it best to go on "pilgrimage" to Mecca (October 1941). Went to Bagdad, where he was entrusted by Ibn Saud with various negotiations between Saudi Arabia and Iraq. Returned to Damascus (September 1942). Entered elections of 1943 as Nationalist leader. Elected Deputy and President of the Republic by overwhelming majority. Fell seriously ill (April 1944); his life was saved by British military doctors with transfusions of British blood. Visited Bagdad in March 1945, where he was not warmly received. Attended meeting of Arab rulers at Inshass in May 1946. Re-elected President for a second term in April 1948.

A determined exponent of pan-Arabism. Is somewhat slow and ponderous. Has not got a quick or brilliant brain but has a good deal of wisdom. Mentally and physically he might not unfairly be likened to an elephant. Makes quite a good representative head of State. Was regarded in the early days of the war as pro-Axis and undoubtedly had contacts with Axis representatives in the Levant, but this can probably be attributed to entire single-mindedness of purpose in the Arab cause. It was at one time rumoured, but there is no proof, that he has used his official position to advance his own financial interests. In 1945 and 1946 he co-operated well with the British authorities and he almost certainly has a sense of profound gratitude towards the British both politically and personally. This is not to say that he might not take a line opposed to British policy if he thought Arab interests lay that way. Is, not unnaturally, profoundly opposed to any suggestion for a monarchical régime in Syria.

110. Rayess, Munir al

Born Hama in 1899. Sunni. Cousin of Najib (q.v.). Strong Nationalist. Joined Palestine rebels in 1936 and became second in command to Fauzi Qawekji. Appointed head of the Secret Police (i.e., political) by the Nationalist Government in 1938 and in that capacity aided Palestine rebels. Dismissed a few months later on charges of brutality. Condemned to twenty years' prison and twenty years' banishment for plotting against life of Bahij al Khatib (head of Council of Directors) in 1939, but released in 1940 at intervention of Italian Armistice Commission. Fled in June 1941 on Allied approach and broadcast for Germans from Athens; returned to Syria at the end of 1945; is sole proprietor of *Barada*.

A dangerous agitator and intriguer, associated with the Arab Club, League of National Action and the ex-Mufti.

111. Rayess, Najib el

Cousin of Munir (q.v.). Born Hama 1898. Sunni. Proprietor and editor of *Qabas*, a strongly Nationalist organ. His paper has been suspended at various times for its violent attitude, notably in 1938 for its attitude towards Palestine troubles. In 1939 condemned to twenty years' prison and twenty years' banishment for implication in plot to murder Bahij al Khatib (head of Council of Directors). Amnestied November 1940 on intervention of Italian Armistice Commission. In Vichy year was anti-Allied. Arrested, but soon released by Allies in February 1942. Rearrested in June 1942 for his share in Jamil Mardam's (q.v.) false claims to Allied

support. Released March 1943. Elected Deputy for Damascus on Shukri Quwatli's list in 1943; member of journalists' delegation which visited London in July 1945. A strong Nationalist, he and his paper now support National Party.

112. Ricaby, Haidar

Born about 1913. Son of the late General Rida Pasha Rikabi, C.B.E. (Governor of Damascus after the British occupation in 1918). Educated at Victoria College in Alexandria and was a teacher in Iraq until May 1941, when he returned to Syria. Was appointed Acting Director of Political Section in the Syrian Foreign Office August 1944-April 1946, but quarrelled with Jamil Mardam Bey (*q.v.*), who was unwilling to give him the advancement he considered he had merited, and has since held an educational post in Iraq. Secretary to Syrian delegation to U.N.O. Conference in London November 1945. Is mildly Nationalist in outlook, although so far he has not been politically active. Speaks and writes very good English. Efficient and hard-working but conceited. A good Moslem.

113. Rifal'i, Ahmed

Born in Aleppo about 1907, studied political economy in Vienna. A member of the Constituent Assembly in 1938 but subsequently gave up politics, concentrating on the administration of his large estate near Aleppo. Elected Deputy in 1947 on the list of the Parliamentary Popular Party. He is a brother-in-law of Abdul Rahman Assam Pasha, their wives being sisters. He is a man of considerable influence in Aleppo, where his family are large landowners. Appointed Minister of Public Works in Jamil Mardam's Government in October 1947 and has, in this capacity, shown himself to be a complete obstructionist on any matter of development or contracts with foreign companies. He spends much of his time in Aleppo, and suffers frequently from rheumatism.

114. Sabah, Dr. Hosni

Born 1900. M.D. of Damascus Medical College 1919. Assistant at the Medical Laboratory 1922-25. Spent 1926 in France, where he specialised in neuralgia and internal diseases. Assistant professor of internal medicine at the Syrian University 1928 and professor 1932. Dean of the Medical College 1938. President of the Syrian University since 1943. Private physician to the President and family. Has made several trips to Europe, especially to France, Germany and United Kingdom.

Author of eleven volumes in Arabic on internal medicine. Speaks Turkish, French, English and German. Does not interfere in politics.

115. Sahnaoui, Jean

Born about 1905. Greek Catholic of humble extraction, one of seven brothers, all of whom are now wealthy. Appointed honorary Spanish Vice-Consul in 1936. Because prominent in Greek Catholic circles was considered pro-Italian, but in year following French collapse showed considerable signs of being pro-British. In April to September 1941 was Minister of Finance in Khalid al Azm Government. During winter of 1941-42 was engaged in large contracts for British army over which he was not too well treated—but has nevertheless made a great deal of money. Represented Syrian Chamber of Commerce at the Commercial Conference held in Chicago in 1945. Left Damascus in May for a lengthy private commercial tour of the United Kingdom, Europe and the United States. His visit to the United Kingdom was strongly backed by the Department of Overseas Trade. Managing director of Syrian Airlines and of big sugar and glass companies and interested in the formation of a National Bank.

Is an extremely unsatisfactory business man to deal with, putting off any decision to the last possible

moment; amiable personality, close personal friend of Khaled el Azm (*q.v.*).

116. Saleh, Sheikh Nawwaf As.

Born about 1880. Bedouin chief. Head of the Hadidiyin tribe, the largest in the Aleppo district. Sheikh Nawwaf was educated in the tribal school at Constantinople, and for the last thirty-five years has been Chief of the Hadidiyin. Given Legion of Honour in 1925. Deputy for Aleppo Tribal Area 1936-39, also in 1943 and again in 1947.

An astute and benevolent ruler, peace-loving and respected. His son Sattam now manages many tribal affairs.

117. Sayegh, Maximos IV

Born in 1878. Archbishop of Tyre in 1919 and of Beirut in 1922. Elected Patriarch of the Greek Catholic Church in the East in succession to Moghabghab in October 1947 by the Synod of the Greek Catholic Church meeting at 'Ain Traz in the Lebanon. He is well liked by the Greek Catholic community and has decided to live in Damascus though he may spend a part of his time in Cairo and Alexandria, where he has palaces. Has on several occasions delivered anti-Communist sermons, and often intrigues in local politics.

118. Sebai, Hani Ben Gehab

Moslem, born about 1902. Lawyer, judge and Deputy for Homs 1943 and again in 1947. With Hilmi Atassi formed a strong opposition movement to the Government; has a certain oratorical skill and impudence in public debate and does not hesitate to speak his mind in the House. Is a professed Monarchist and now a member of the Parliamentary Constitutional Party. Almost penniless in his capacity as a judge, he has had recourse many times to those legal adjustments for money so necessary among underpaid Syrian officials.

119. Sebai, Sheikh Mustafa al

Born in Homs about 1915. Studied at Al-Azhar University, Cairo, where he was when Rashid Ali's rebellion took place. He was accused of having distributed a circular in Cairo calling on the Egyptian people to support the movement, was arrested by the Egyptian police and detained for some two months without trial; deported from Egypt and interned by the British authorities in Palestine at Sarafand for seven months. Repatriated to Syria, where he was again interned for two years, first at Mieh-Mieh and then at Rashia; released early 1945, when he began to take a strong interest in the Moslem Brethren. For the past three years he has been director of the Arab Institute in Damascus (a school run by the Moslem Brethren). He is now controller-general of the Moslem Brethren in both Syria and the Lebanon, and is one of the principal editors of *El Manar* newspaper, the mouthpiece of the Moslem Brethren.

He is an ardent Moslem and declares himself to be anti-Communist.

120. Sha'alan, Amir Fawwaz

Born about 1907. Grandson of Nuri, whom he succeeded on latter's death in 1942. Even before he became chief, had a strong following in the Ruwalla. Treacherously slew his rival and cousin, Farhan bin Mashur, near Palmyra in April 1935. Has married both his sisters into Ibn Saud's family, one to Ibn Saud himself and the other to the Amir Saud. These matches are looked upon by the Bedouin as having a political significance in connexion with the Wadi Sirhan grazing lands and the Jauf Oasis. Was Deputy 1936-39 under the Nationalist banner.

During the British blockade of Vichy Syria (1941) conducted a remunerative contraband trade between Transjordan and Syria. During Syrian campaign he and the Ruwalla remained strictly neutral, although the Vichy French gave them a number of arms, which they largely surrendered on the Allied arrival in

Damascus. In 1942 he was given profitable contracts by the British army. Elected Deputy for Bedouins of Damascus area 1943, and again in 1947; visited America at the time of the United Nations Conference in San Francisco, April 1945, and spent a month in England on his way back.

Like all Bedouin, a shameless money-seeker. Despite the fact that much of his earlier life was spent in Syrian and European cabarets, he is now a more dignified character, respected by the other tribal leaders and is becoming a leading force in the desert. His close connexions with Ibn Saud result in him being the only big tribal leader who is definitely opposed to Greater Syria.

121. Shamieh, Tewfiq

Born about 1880. Greek Orthodox. Head of Faisal's political bureau. One of the leaders of the People's Party 1924, but, because he supported Sheikh Taj ed Din in 1928, the Nationalists dropped him. Minister of Public Works under the Damad 1926, and Minister of Public Works under Taj ed Din 1928-29. Minister of Finance 1931, but unemployed after the elections until June 1936, when he was appointed Mohafiz of the Euphrates. Kidnapped by Jeziriot autonomists December 1937. Was still Mohafiz when Allies arrived during Syrian campaign in June 1941. He collaborated closely with Allies in settlement of the infamous Mayadin incident. Accused of peculation, he was transferred to Hama as Mohafiz 1942, but resigned almost immediately. Withdrew his candidature in 1943 elections in favour of Naim Antaki in Saadullah Jabri's first Government, August 1943 to October 1944. Suspected of being implicated in scandals connected with the export of soap. Appointed Member of Council of Common Interests, January 1947.

A well-educated man with definite Nationalist outlook, who speaks English and French. Anxious to see close and friendly relations between Great Britain and the Greek Orthodox community.

122. Sharabati, Ahmed

Born about 1909. Student in the American University of Beirut. B.Sc., C.E., from M.I.T. (United States). Speaks, besides Arabic, English, French, German and Turkish. Spent some time in the United States and collected money in the Arab cause, establishing Society for Arab Propaganda. Returned to Syria in 1930 and started tobacco-growing and other industrial enterprises in Transjordan and Syria. In 1931-32 established the League of National Action. From 1935 to 1939 worked as contractor in Egypt and Iraq. Drew the unfavourable attention of the French in 1939 by delivering speeches urging national unity and was sentenced with other members of the League of National Action to twenty years' imprisonment and twenty years' deportation. Fled to Transjordan, where he started a fishery at Akaba. Returned to Syria when the British occupied Damascus in 1941 and resumed his political activities with the League of National Action. Has remained a firm supporter of Shukri Quwatli and was elected Deputy for Damascus in August 1943 and again in 1947; March 1945 was Minister of Education in Fares el Khoury's first Government; Minister of Education and Acting Minister of National Economy in Fares el Khoury's second Government, April to August 1945; Minister of Education and National Economy in Fares el Khoury's third Government for a few days in 1945. Minister of Education in Saadullah Jabri's third Government, April 1946, but was transferred to Ministry of National Defence in June 1946 after the resignation of Nebih Azme. Minister of Defence December to October 1947 and again in October 1947 to 23rd May, 1948, when he was asked by the President to resign. Is in close touch with the

American Legation and has been recently appointed agent in Syria for General Motors.

Although he is quite wild, he has considerable drive and managed to retain the confidence of Shukri Bey Quwatli until the Syrian army entered Palestine and its shortcomings were obvious for all to see. He is married to a Lithuanian whom he is alleged to have met in Tel Aviv.

123. Shayish, Abdul Karim, Emir

Born about 1895. Chief of the Mawali Qibliyin and has influence throughout the tribe. In 1925-26 joined the rebels against French and sentenced to a year's imprisonment. Deputy 1936-39 and again in 1943. Has considerable hold over his tribe. Intelligent but a hypocrite.

124. Shehabi, Amir Bahjat al

Born about 1885. Moslem. Cousin of Mustafa (*q.v.*). Studied law in Constantinople. Given an appointment in the Damascus police during the Faisal régime, but dismissed by the French. Elected head of the Damascus Bar in 1934-36. Mohafiz of the Jezireh 1937. President of the Damascus Court of Appeal 1938, but resigned a few months later to resume his practice. Appointed Mohafiz of Damascus town, February 1947. Member of Iraq Defence Committee (May 1941) organised to collect money and recruits for Iraq rising. An influential Nationalist, and lawyer.

125. Shehabi, Amir Mustafa

Born in Damascus 1893. Of Lebanese origin (Hasbaya). Cousin of Amir Bahjat (*q.v.*). Studied at one of the French schools in Damascus, at Istanbul and at the Agricultural School of Châlons, France. Lieutenant under Faisal and Inspector of Agriculture. Took flight when Faisal was forced to withdraw from Syria. Returned to Syria in 1923, when he was appointed Director of State Domains. In 1934 his position as Director of State Domains was suppressed and Shehabi was attached to the Ministry of Agriculture by Sheikh Taj ed Din. In 1935 he was one of the directors of the Damascus Exhibition, and in 1936 (February to December) was Minister of Education under Ata Bey Ayoubi. He accompanied the Syrian delegation to Paris for the negotiation of the Franco-Syrian Treaty (1936). Mohafez of Aleppo (February 1937 to March 1939) under the Cabinet of Jamil Mardam, after which he went into retirement, devoting his time to compiling an Arabic-French botanical dictionary. Appointed Minister of Finance in the Jemil Ulshi Government on 8th January, 1943. Resigned on personal grounds on 17th March, 1943. Was appointed Minister of Finance, National Economy and Ravitaillement in Ata Ayoubi's Provisional Government, March to August 1943. Mohafez of Lattakia 1943 to 1945. Secretary-General of Prime Minister's Office, December 1945 to June 1946. Appointed Mohafez of Aleppo, June 1946 to January 1948, when he was transferred to Lattakia as Mohafez. In politics Amir Mustafa Shehabi is a sympathiser of the Istiklal group, but plays no active part. Enjoys reputation as a man of probity and drive. An agreeable personality, modest in demeanour but can be very obstinate.

126. Sherif, Ihsan

Born about 1892. Lawyer. French degree (*à titre d'étranger*). Secretary of the People's Party 1924. Member of the Constituent Assembly 1928, when he held most uncompromising Nationalist views. Insisted on standing for elections in 1932; thus nearly spoiling the agreement with the High Commissioner's delegate. Nationalist Deputy, 1932 and 1936. Appointed Syrian member on Joint Higher Commission for Common Interests with Lebanese, January to September 1944. Mohafez of Aleppo, September 1944 to May 1946, during which period he was successful in preventing any major clash between Syrians and French. Earned the gratitude of the Christian minorities for protecting

their interests, for which he has been decorated by the Pope. Appointed first Syrian Minister to the Turkish Republic, July 1946. Syrian representative on Security Council Committee of Enquiry to Greece, January 1947. Syrian Minister to Greece since September 1947. A man of sincere convictions with a violent temper. A minor Nationalist leader, who has, however, not been active for some time.

127. Shretah, Abdul Qader

Born about 1890. A very rich and pious Sunni Moslem and head of one of the most important Moslem families in the Alawite Province. His family was robbed of a portion of its property by Suleiman Murshed in 1939. It was restored in 1942, notably the village of Bustamo. Deputy in Syrian Parliament 1937. Convinced Nationalist in politics. Arrested in November 1942 for anti-Allied sentiments and believed connexion with Axis spies; released in 1945. Haughty and truculent.

128. Sidawi, Wadi'

Born Damascus 1907. Greek Orthodox. Took law degree, Damascus 1925. Worked as assistant for seventeen years to Yusuf el Isa (q.v.) on the paper *Alef Ba*, and in 1942 bought *Al Kifah* from Amin Said, but abandoned it in early 1943 to its original proprietor; now financially interested in *El Nasr*. Speaks English and French. Was pro-Allied during the second world war but has since developed a greed for money which results in his newspaper vilifying anyone or any Government for a sufficient payment. In the first half of 1948 *El Nasr* has been particularly anti-British over Palestine, and has closely followed the changes in Communist treatment of news.

129. Stati, Mgr. Iyunis

Born about 1884. Of Homs. Syrian Catholic Bishop of Damascus (1933). Not a fanatical Christian, i.e., he can bear sight of Christians not members of his church. Is an ardent defender of the "minorities" cause. Generally esteemed. Pro-British in Vichy year.

130. Sulh, Afif al

Born Saida (Lebanon) 1890. Studied law at Istanbul, but does not practise. Interested in politics and opposed the Turks before the 1914 war, during which he was Turkish officer. Accused of giving the names of the Arabs hanged by Jemal Pasha, but no proof forthcoming. Sent on a mission by M. de Jouvenel to Jebel Druse in 1926 to negotiate with leaders of the revolt. At that time, was one of the leading Nationalists willing to co-operate with the French. Organiser of the Nationalist Party in 1927. Took an active part in organising the general strike in January 1936. Was exiled by the French, but was amnestied with others in March of the same year. Deputy for Damascus, 1936 and 1943. Minister to Bagdad March 1947. Not a man of much personality.

131. Urfi, Sheikh Said

Born Deir ez Zor about 1890. Sunni Moslem. Claims to be related with the Sherifian family of Mecca. Mufti of the Euphrates. Officer in Turkish army in World War but was with the Amir Faisal in Damascus in 1919 and since then has remained in close touch with leading political personalities in Iraq. Opposed the Rashid Ali Revolt in 1941. Strong pan-Arab and keen supporter of policy followed by the late King Faisal. A good orator and able to sway a crowd by sheer fanaticism. On friendly terms with the French though at heart he dislikes them intensely.

132. Yaziji, Toufiq

Born about 1898. Christian from Kalakh. Educated Suqleharb American High School. Left Syria for Cairo in 1940, when he was on the editorial staff of *El Hilal* and *El Ahram*. Has travelled in Europe and United States. Speaks English and French. Appointed second counsellor to Syrian Legation in

Cairo, April 1945. Did not proceed. Left Syria for Egypt in July 1945 in connexion with the printing of the Syrian Black Book (record of alleged French misdeeds). On his return in August appointed Director of Arab Section at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Returned to Cairo with Jamil Mardam, October 1945; transferred as Counsellor to Brazil, January 1946, and especially delegated to carry out pro-Arab propaganda in South America.

An unpleasant little man but intelligent.

133. Yusuf, Mohamed Said al

Born about 1899. A Kurd and landowner. Son of Abdurrahman Pasha and hereditary chief of Kurds in Syria and Palestine. He received his education at A.U.B. and during 1914 war in Austria and Germany in company with many young Syrians who, for political reasons, were made much of by the German authorities. Speaks German, French and English, is widely read and highly cultivated, but a *flâneur*. His father had great influence among Kurds owing to his position, but he has largely lost it. Has a German wife. Of no political importance, but may have ambitions.

134. Za'im, Colonel Husni al

Born 1898, graduated from the Turkish Military College, Istanbul, in 1916, and took part in the First World War in the Hejaz. Taken prisoner of war at Medina in September 1919. Served for a short period in King Feisal's Army. Graduated from the Military College, Damascus, with the rank first lieutenant in 1924, and joined the *Troupes Spéciales*; promoted to captain 1928, commanded a company at Alexandretta in 1935. Sent on a special mission to France in 1936 where he attended military courses. Commander of the Sixth Legion 1937. Promoted to lieutenant-colonel June 1941, when he joined the Vichy forces. But after a disagreement with Colonel Colet was arrested and sentenced to ten years' imprisonment. Was released in 1943. Returned to Syrian army as lieutenant-colonel in command of Euphrates and Jezireh in 1946, acting Director-General of Police January to May 1948; appointed acting Chief of Staff of Syrian army a week after the invasion of Palestine, with the rank of full colonel. He is more of a staff officer than a fighting soldier, and always appears to have been ready to work with the highest bidder. For the moment he enjoys the support of Shukri Quwatli, but until quite recently he was known to be in favour of King Abdullah's scheme for Greater Syria.

135. Zain ed Din, Farid

Born about 1905. A Druse of Lebanese origin. Studied at American University, Beirut, specialising in economics, and later continued his studies in England and France (Doctor of Law, Paris, 1932). Acquired Syrian nationality and joined the Nationalist *bloc*. In July 1938 appointed Assistant Under-Secretary of State in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. After fall of Nationalist Government, went to Beirut. Was a prominent member of the Arab Club in Damascus, the centre of pro-Nazi intrigue. In 1940-41 is believed to have been go-between for the Italian Armistice Commission and Shukri Quwatli. Arrested by Allies and interned until 1943. Director-General of Supply, January to November 1944. Syrian representative on General Supply Council, March 1944. Expert to Syrian delegation to U.N.O. Conference at San Francisco, April 1945. Syrian representative of Preliminary Committee and member of delegation to U.N.O. Conference in London, November 1945. Is believed to have lined his pockets while in Ministry of Supply. Appointed Minister to Moscow April 1947. Member of Syrian delegation to U.N.O. April 1947 and September 1947.

Is xenophobe in general and in the past was pronouncedly Anglophobe; his attitude towards the British now is not clear, but he has not ceased to resent his internment in Mich-Mich.

SYRIAN FINANCIAL NEGOTIATIONS WITH FRANCE AND THE LEBANON

Mr. Dundas to Mr. Bevin. (Received 27th September)

(No. 116)
Sir,

Damascus,
22nd September, 1948.

I have the honour to set out the history of Syrian financial negotiations with France and the Lebanon over the last eight months, even though some of the ground covered has been reported previously and in more detail, since political and public concentration during this period has been so largely directed outside Syria.

2. In the closing months of 1947 the French were preparing a revised financial agreement with the Levant States to replace the one signed in 1944. The new agreement provided that the 16 milliard francs standing to the credit of the Levant States in France should be guaranteed against devaluation; 3 milliard francs of this sum should be retained by France in payment for French assets in the States seized by the local Governments; half the balance should be paid over a period of five years, commencing in 1953, on the basis of 50 per cent. in European currencies at the free market rate in Paris, 50 per cent. in goods at prices ruling at the date of shipment. The remaining 6½ milliard francs to be blocked for ten years, and to this sum was to be added sums due in compensation for devaluation of the franc; at the end of ten years, discussions were to take place to decide the manner in which this amount was to be paid. A further sum of 7 milliard francs was held in Paris as cover for credits and deposits with the Banque de Syrie et du Liban. This sum the French refused to guarantee against devaluation of the franc, and proposed to pay within two years, half in goods and half in European currencies.

3. The Syrians have maintained that throughout the negotiations they were concerned only to liquidate their assets, and did not wish to conclude a further financial agreement. The final draft was ready in early January. On 31st January the Lebanese initialled the draft, but the Syrians raised objections, in particular to the French claim for compensation. The French extended the time-limit for agreement by six days, during which French and Lebanese pressure was brought on to the Syrians, who still refused to sign and

declared that henceforth they would be responsible for their own currency.

4. From an economic point of view Syria and the Lebanon are basically complementary; tariff barriers between the two countries would in all probability operate to the disadvantage of both States. This fact was recognised in the existence of a customs union, directed by a body known as the "Conseil supérieur des intérêts communs," sitting for six months alternately in Beirut and Damascus. An independent Syrian economy could, however, operate only if the Syrian Government maintained control over the flow of goods and currency, or if the Lebanese Government agreed to restrict imports and currency issue (of the existing joint currency) to conform with Syrian economic policy.

5. Signature of the agreement by the Lebanese Government meant that the Syrians found themselves in an impossible position as long as they continued their economic union with the Lebanon; for they could have no control over the two factors most affecting their internal financial position. Accordingly, and in advance of the Lebanese ratification of the agreement, which took place at the end of August, the Syrians declared their currency independent; limited the amount of Syrian currency which could be transferred or taken out of the country free of permission to £Syr 200; separated in March the Tobacco Régie and the Damascus-Homs et Prolongements Railway from Lebanese partnership; transactions in foreign currencies were suspended for a month pending the abolition of the existing Joint Syrian-Lebanese Exchange Control under the administration of the Banque de Syrie et du Liban and the establishment of an independent Syrian Exchange Control Office under the supervision of the Ministry of Finance, and for a short while the export of goods to the Lebanon was prohibited. Meanwhile Syrian politicians attempted to persuade the Lebanese not to ratify the French agreement, and though formally committed to the dissolution of the economic union, made a temporary "gentleman's agreement," which, by being

extended on several occasions, is not due to expire until 30th September.

6. Whatever the material balance of advantages in continuing the French association might be, the Syrian decision to separate was quite certainly taken as a political necessity. The Egyptian separation from the sterling *bloc* had pointed the way, and no Syrian politician, particularly the President, who was nearing the end of his campaign for a second term of office, could afford to advise negotiation with the French. The decision was therefore received by the public with a wave of press-sponsored enthusiasm, and responsible Ministers vied with each other in stimulating the patriotic feelings of the country in the cause. No thought as to the consequences appeared to have been given in advance, and the measures outlined above were issued piecemeal. The issue then resolved itself into—

- (1) The desirability for the creation of a National Bank, and
- (2) The obtaining of cover adequate for the new currency.

7. So far the National Bank has not been formed. Three Egyptian experts who arrived in Damascus to advise on its formation left—with Syrian decorations—after a week's stay, nothing apparently having been accomplished. Hopes for the currency backing were based on this year's exceptionally good wheat crop. The governmental wheat-collecting organisation, Mira, was continued in operation to cover the harvest, and the Syrian Government then offered to sell wheat abroad against hard currencies at a price well above the world level. An initial quantity of 50,000–60,000 tons was offered against payment in dollars, and although officially confirmed on 7th July that a contract had been concluded with an Aleppine merchant residing in Beirut for the sale to Italy of 50,000 tons at 158 dollars per ton f.o.b. Beirut, the deal was later reported to have fallen through on the ground that the Italian Government refused to pay the high price demanded. An agreement for the sale to Iraq of 30,000 tons at £45 sterling per ton was signed at the end of August. Meanwhile Syria was running into difficulties with Lebanese currency, the Lebanese having withdrawn all Syrian notes from circulation, and, consequently, though unwillingly, agreed to sell wheat to the Lebanon for Lebanese exchange. This exchange was

needed; *inter alia*, to pay the oil companies for oil imports to Syria, all of which transit the Lebanon or are refined there. At the beginning of September the Syrian Government's indebtedness to the two major importers was 4 million Lebanese pounds. These oil products represent the only commodity absolutely necessary to her economy imported by Syria from the Lebanon. If either of the refineries projected by the Iraq Petroleum Company or the Middle East Pipe-line come into production in Syria the importation from Lebanon of even these oil products will become unnecessary, and the acquisition of Lebanese currency would cease to be essential for Syria.

8. Other foreign exchange was equally scarce, and the Syrian Government applied to His Majesty's Government for permission to use limited sums of sterling for the expenses of Syrian legations and students in Belgium, Greece, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Turkey. They were also glad to agree to the suggestion, made in the first instance by His Majesty's Government, that a payments agreement should be negotiated between the United Kingdom and Syria. Conversations were carried on in the latter part of August between a representative of the Treasury and Syrian Ministers and officials; but to no result, as the Syrians were unable to convince Mr. Waight of their ability to control the free market in sterling by the measures they proposed. From the tenor of the conversations it seems evident that the Syrians had hoped by this agreement to secure enough sterling to form a reasonable proportion of the backing for their new currency.

9. The temper of the Government has now changed from the airy, patriotic irresponsibility in which they first decided to separate from the franc. The determination to have an independent currency remains, but with it there is a realisation of the difficulties which lie in the way, and of the severe harm which an interruption of economic union with the Lebanon can do to the country's economy.

10. Recently, in a conversation with me, the Syrian Minister for Foreign Affairs gave as his views that, while Syria was at present in difficulties, the Lebanon's economy was based on her trade with Syria; without it she would become unviable. Syria, however, could not afford the uncontrolled import and export of commodities which the Lebanon desired; there were, therefore, only two courses open to Syria, either to obtain the agreement of the

Lebanese Government to the prohibition and/or control of various exports and imports along lines which suited Syrian economy, or to set up customs barriers between the two States. In the long run the second course would be disastrous to the Lebanon; and extremely inconvenient to Syria; he sincerely hoped that the Lebanese would agree to co-operate.

11. The economic differences outlined above have, during the past nine months, shown a tendency, in Syria at least, to lead to inflame political opinions; and, should Lebanon persist in her course of refusing to co-operate with Syria in protecting the

latter's economy, it is not impossible that Syria will raise her claim to the four qazas, a claim which she has been content to neglect as long as economic and political relations have remained friendly—such a claim might find support amongst various Lebanese factions and add fuel to the confessional ill-feeling to which Mr. Houston Boswell's despatch No. 81 of 26th June, 1948, draws attention.

I am copying this despatch to His Majesty's representative at Beirut and to the British Middle East Office.

I have, &c.
C. A. F. DUNDAS.

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No. 8

SYRIAN-LEBANESE ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL RELATIONS

Mr. Evans to Mr. Bevin. (Received 25th October)

(No. 115 E.)
Sir,

Beirut,
21st October, 1948.

I have the honour to refer to despatch No. 116 of 22nd September addressed to you by His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Damascus on the subject of Syrian financial negotiations with France and the Lebanon.

2. Since the end of August a series of meetings has been held between representatives of the Lebanese and Syrian Governments in order to find a basis for an agreement to cover the future economic and financial relations between the two countries. In the course of the discussions three main problems have emerged; a satisfactory solution can reasonably be expected to be found for one of these, but the remainder have only served to throw into relief the difficulties which confront the countries in their efforts to reach understanding.

3. The first of the Lebanese objectives was to reach agreement with Syria regarding the purchase of wheat in sufficient quantities to supply the country until the harvest of 1949. Even with an exceptionally good harvest the Lebanon is not self-supporting in cereals and has to purchase the balance of its requirements from abroad. This year the Lebanese Government have asked the Syrians to supply 30,000 tons of wheat, and as this quantity falls well within the Syrian exportable surplus negotiations were opened for a purchase agreement. Difficulties were soon encountered as the price demanded by the

Syrians compared unfavourably with the landed cost of Australian or Canadian wheat. The price difficulty would not unduly have worried the Lebanese had they been allowed to pay in Syrian currency, but Syrian demands were originally for payment in hard currencies, which made the offer clearly unacceptable. As a result of the withdrawal of Syrian currency from circulation in the Lebanon last February a sum of approximately £(Syr.) 40 million has been frozen in Lebanese banks pending agreement as to its utilisation, and it was the Lebanese hope that this sum could be used to purchase Syrian wheat. The Syrians, however, declined to accept that this blocked account should be used for wheat payments, but eventually agreed to payment in Lebanese currency. Syria has need of Lebanese currency in order to pay for her Tripoli oil imports, which have to be purchased from the refinery by the marketing companies in Lebanese currency, and the Syrian inability to pay in this form has already led to serious difficulties between the Syrian Government and the oil distributors (see Damascus telegram to you No. 499 of 23rd September).

4. Although it is generally felt that Lebanese wheat requirements will be met largely by imports from Syria no definite arrangement has been made, and in order to strengthen their bargaining position the Lebanese have drawn attention to their present satisfactory supply position and to the fact that licences have been granted to

private traders to import upwards of 20,000 tons of wheat from Canada.

5. The second main topic of discussion has been the reintroduction of the system (suspended in February last) whereby the Syrian and Lebanese currencies were freely interchangeable. Since the Lebanese acceptance of a financial agreement with France the greater proportion of the Lebanese note issue has been guaranteed by the French Treasury, while the Syrian has not, and with the failure of the Syrian Government to find a backing for the note issue, the value of the Syrian pound has declined to a point where it was being quoted at a discount of 5-6 per cent. on the Beirut market. In addition to the obvious disadvantages which this entails from the Syrian point of view, it has also had a disturbing effect on the Lebanese economy. Syrian merchants, apprehensive as to the future of the Syrian pound, have been buying gold and foreign exchange as well as substantial quantities of merchandise on the local market up to an extent where prices have been gradually forced up.

6. However desirable it may be to reinstate the two currencies on their old basis of interchangeability (and this is generally agreed), there would appear to be little prospect of an arrangement for stabilisation of the Syrian pound with the Lebanese until the Syrians find some adequate backing for their currency. In this connexion there is now a strongly held local belief that discussions are in progress between the Syrian and French Governments for some form of monetary agreement; the recent meetings held in Geneva between Hassan Jebara and Busson, director-general of the Banque de Syrie et du Liban, and the subsequent arrival of Busson here have lent some support to this view. It is not within the province of this despatch to speculate on the possible Syrian attitude in such discussions, but merely to record the local belief (and hope) that the Syrians will be forced to conclude some face-saving agreement with the French which may include some temporary support of the Syrian currency. I would add, however, that on 17th October the Lebanese Minister for Foreign Affairs informed me that the Syrian Government had definitely decided to sign.

7. The problem which has aroused keenest local interest and which has tended to overshadow the currency problem (from which it cannot easily be separated) is the proposal to restrict the hitherto free import

of goods into the two countries. Religious and political influences, never far from the surface, have tended to obscure the issue: nevertheless the differences of opinion on this question are not without interest as revealing divisions which run through Lebanese society. It cannot be denied that since the war the two countries have been maintaining imports on a scale far above their limited export capacity, and that, despite the vast but largely improved invisible earnings of the Lebanese, there has been a serious drain on the inhabitants' substantial foreign exchange resources. The Syrian Government, now realising too late that the sums expended on luxuries and consumer goods might better have been employed in the purchase of capital equipment for the development of the country and in the creation of some reserve with which to back a note issue, have decided that imports must henceforth be limited to necessities and related to the countries' exporting capacity.

8. The Lebanese, on the other hand, are divided in their attitude to the question. The influential Christian merchants contend that the Lebanon can live only by its large and well-organised entrepôt trade and that such a trade is only possible because the Lebanon is one of the few remaining countries where almost any form of article can be freely imported and sold. Furthermore, although much of the trade is in luxuries and non-essentials it is by the handling of these goods that they (and in their view the Lebanon as a whole) can exist. Any restriction on imports would, therefore, mean financial ruin for a number of importers. They also point out that the standards of life in the Lebanon and Syria are not comparable, and what is regarded as a luxury by many Syrians is a necessity to many of the westernised Lebanese, who do not see why they should be compelled to give up their way of life to satisfy Syrian ideals of austerity. They argue that the ease and luxury of life here is one of its main attractions for foreigners and for tourists. While this is partly true, it is also true that the Lebanese themselves like their luxuries and find the selling of them a profitable business. The leading merchants, both as individuals and through their business organisations, have maintained steady pressure on the Government and on the public to resist any attempt to restrict imports even though it leads to a complete break with Syria and the erection of customs barriers between the two

countries. They are confident that the Lebanese genius for smuggling would minimise any adverse effect of any attempt by the Syrian Government to exclude Lebanese-handled goods from the Syrian market. Linked also with their theory is the ideal of a small Christian Lebanon free from all restriction and acting as the great entrepôt centre of the Middle East.

9. On the other hand, the Moslems as a whole maintain that nothing must be done to loosen the ties between them and their Syrian neighbours. Pursuing the same policy but for different motives are the numerically small but powerful Lebanese industrialists comprising some of the leading Christians, who hope that a restriction of imports would eliminate foreign competition and who fear that the introduction of a customs barrier by Syria would deprive them of their best market. They therefore argue that the Syrian policy is justified and that the Lebanese should fall into line. They also contend that economic collaboration is of prime necessity to both countries and that no entrepôt centre can survive amid neighbours who are hostile and who are pursuing a policy of controlled economy.

10. The position of the Lebanese Government has so far represented a balance between the two views, and while the Lebanese negotiations have hitherto shown no disposition to accept the Syrian's drastic proposals for limitation of imports, there is a feeling that some concessions must be made under this heading as a price of obtaining agreement. But when an attempt is made to specify the actual goods, import of which is to be prohibited or restricted, the differences in outlook, taste and needs of the two countries immediately give rise to difficulty. The Lebanese are, moreover, sufficiently realistic in their estimate of their administrative efficiency and genius for evasion to know that one practical effect of restriction will be the creation of a vast smuggling trade between the two countries and in the Lebanon itself.

11. The commercial secretary has been asked unofficially on several occasions what our policy as an exporting country would be to a restriction on imports. As it has not yet been possible to ascertain the precise nature of the commodities threatened he has replied that while His Majesty's Government would regret the introduction of import restriction, we could not, especially in view of our own present policy, oppose non-discriminatory measures which the Lebanese might feel compelled to take to safeguard their economy and their foreign exchange position. Mr. Paterson is also of the opinion that the United Kingdom is not at present the main supplier of frivolous and unnecessary goods to this market, and that these come principally from France and the United States, he thinks, however, that British exports of textiles and non-commercial vehicles may be affected by the proposed restrictions. Attempts have been made by the "free traders" to elicit statements from members of this legation which would enable them to claim that His Majesty's Government is on their side, but a purely neutral attitude has been adopted.

12. At the moment, therefore, there is no sign of agreement despite the numerous announcements that drafts were ready for signature, and each week brings a further intensification of the press campaign for and against the Syrian thesis, while the confusion of the present and the uncertainty of the future in commercial circles are causing the timid to hold back and the bold to launch out in speculation and in the purchase of any commodities which threaten to become scarce. This abnormal and unsatisfactory state of affairs will continue until the shape of the ultimate future arrangement becomes clearer.

I am sending copies of this despatch to His Majesty's Minister at Damascus and to the head of the British Middle East Office.

I have, &c.
T. E. EVANS.

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No. 9

DISTURBANCES IN SYRIA

Mr. Broadmead to Mr. McNeil. (Received 13th December)

(No. 136)
Sir,

*Damascus,
8th December, 1948*

With reference to my telegram No. 580 of 30th November, I have the honour to report in greater detail on the disturbances

which have taken place in Syria during the past week.

2. On 29th November students in Damascus organised a demonstration avowedly in protest against the United

Nations' recommendation for partition of Palestine of 29th November, 1947. The demonstrators proceeded in orderly fashion through the town which was closed, but, as well as protests against partition, shouts were heard against the Syrian Government and Jamil Mardam by name, against the British and against Anglo-Arab treaties. The next day the town remained closed and somewhat larger demonstrations took place in which it was noticeable that elements other than the students took part, including members of the Baath el Arabi Party and the Ikhwan el Muslimeen. The demonstrators were more vocal in their cries against the Government and its individual members. About midday they congregated outside the Chamber of Deputies where they were addressed by three Deputies, all of whom had, it is understood, severely criticised the policy of the Government the evening before at a secret session of the Chamber held to discuss Palestine. From Parliament the demonstrators proceeded to the showrooms of the General Motors agent, owned by Ahmed Sharabati, the Minister of Defence who resigned in May shortly after the opening of hostilities in Palestine. They forced an entry, burnt two motor cars and smashed the contents of the showrooms. The following day still larger demonstrations took place in which the original protests against the partition of Palestine were swamped by cries against the Government, Jamil Mardam and the Syrian President. Despite efforts of the police to prevent a crowd collecting, several thousand demonstrators attempted to approach the Serail. Acting on instructions the police and gendarmerie opened fire on the demonstrators with rifles and automatics. After about half an hour the demonstrators were forced back from the Serail and broke into smaller crowds which tried to approach the Chamber of Deputies, the Presidency and the Citadel where about a dozen demonstrators, arrested on the previous days, were imprisoned. Shooting continued off and on throughout the morning, and a number of casualties occurred. No official figures have been issued, but it is thought that above five of the demonstrators were killed and between forty and fifty wounded and taken to hospital. On the following day a funeral procession was formed to convey the coffins of those killed to the Omayyad Mosque, and clashes with the police and gendarmerie again occurred. A few hand grenades were thrown by the

demonstrators and firing continued off and on throughout the morning.

3. The next morning an announcement was made over the Damascus Broadcasting Station that public security had been taken over by the Syrian army; a proclamation was issued in the press over the signature of the commander-in-chief of the Syrian forces in which all gatherings were prohibited, the carrying of arms of any kind was banned, and a curfew was announced lasting from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. Units of the Syrian army were posted throughout the city and the streets were patrolled by military armoured cars. Censorship, internal and external, was taken over by the military, and trunk and telephone calls could be made only with military permission. No disturbances took place during the day and a few shops began to open in the afternoon.

4. On 4th December conditions in the town had returned to normal, and on 5th December Syrian soldiers were largely withdrawn, the police and gendarmerie returning to their normal duties.

5. On 5th December an announcement was made over the Damascus radio that the curfew would commence at 8 p.m. instead of at 6 p.m., but the proclamation of Military Control of Security remains in force.

6. I have not had as yet any first-hand information about events in Aleppo but, according to the press, demonstrations were staged there on 1st December in sympathy with the Damascus manifestations. Similarly, demonstrations are said to have taken place in Homs, Hama and Deir-*ez-Zor*; in the latter town they were openly described as being against the Government.

7. The explanation of the events which I have outlined above is, I believe, to be found in the continued ineffectiveness of Syrian Governments since June 1945 in all matters concerning foreign policy, economics and internal affairs (though in this latter connexion it should be noted that the internal security of the country has been well maintained during the period); the steady deterioration of the Arab situation in Palestine and the realisation that the Syrian military effort has failed has given point to criticism of Government inefficiency. Other immediate causes of dissatisfaction have been the unstable situation with regard to Syrian currency, the failure of economic talks with Lebanon, the shortage of oil products due to currency diffi-

culties which has resulted in considerable hardship in the larger towns of Syria, the increase in the price of bread and the heavier taxation proposed in the 1949 budget. During the past year there has therefore been steadily increasing dissatisfaction with the policy of the Syrian Government and equally with the Syrian President. The Popular Party has in Parliament consistently opposed the policy of succeeding Governments and the re-election of the President, and there is little doubt that in the recent disturbances in Damascus they have combined with extremist organisations, such as the Baath el Arabi and the Ikhwan el Muslimeen, to force the resignation of Jamil Mardam's Government and to make things as generally difficult for the Syrian President as possible.

8. Up to the time of writing this despatch the Syrian President has been unable to find anyone able to form a new Government. Hashem Bey Atassi, an ex-President of the Republic, failed to do so, as did Mustafa Barmada, an ex-President of the Court of Appeal. The Emir Adel Arslan has now been charged with the task. It is generally believed that the Popular Party are insisting as a condition of joining the new Government on a number of points of which the more important are said to be dissolution of Parliament, the reconsideration of the President's re-election for a second term of office by the new Government, and the trial of Ahmed

Sharabati, Minister of Defence up till May of this year, and of Fuad Mardam, a cousin of Jamil Bey Mardam, who is alleged to be implicated in the selling of arms to the Jews. Unless an all-party Government can be formed it is probable that the Popular Party will remain in opposition and will continue to make use of extremist elements to create difficulties for the Government.

9. The Syrian President is no doubt aware of the widespread dissatisfaction of the public with himself and with previous Government. His deep-seated fear of King Abdullah's Great Syria schemes is probably adding to his uneasiness; the control of public security by the army, whose chief, Husni Zaim, is known to have been in touch with King Abdullah in the past, may turn out to be a double-edged weapon since a military *coup d'Etat* could in present circumstances be more easily brought off than at any other time in the past. It seems probable therefore that the President will work for a strong all-party Government at the earliest possible moment with a return to normal control of security by police and gendarmerie.

I am sending copies of this despatch to His Majesty's representatives at Beirut, Amman, Bagdad, Cairo, Jeddah and to the British Middle East Office.

I have, &c.

P. M. BROADMEAD.